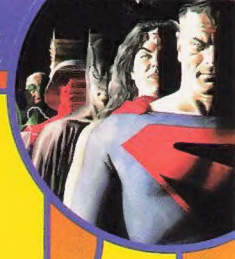
THE GUIDE TO COMICS • 57

KINGDOM COME ALEX ROSS SKETCHBOOK



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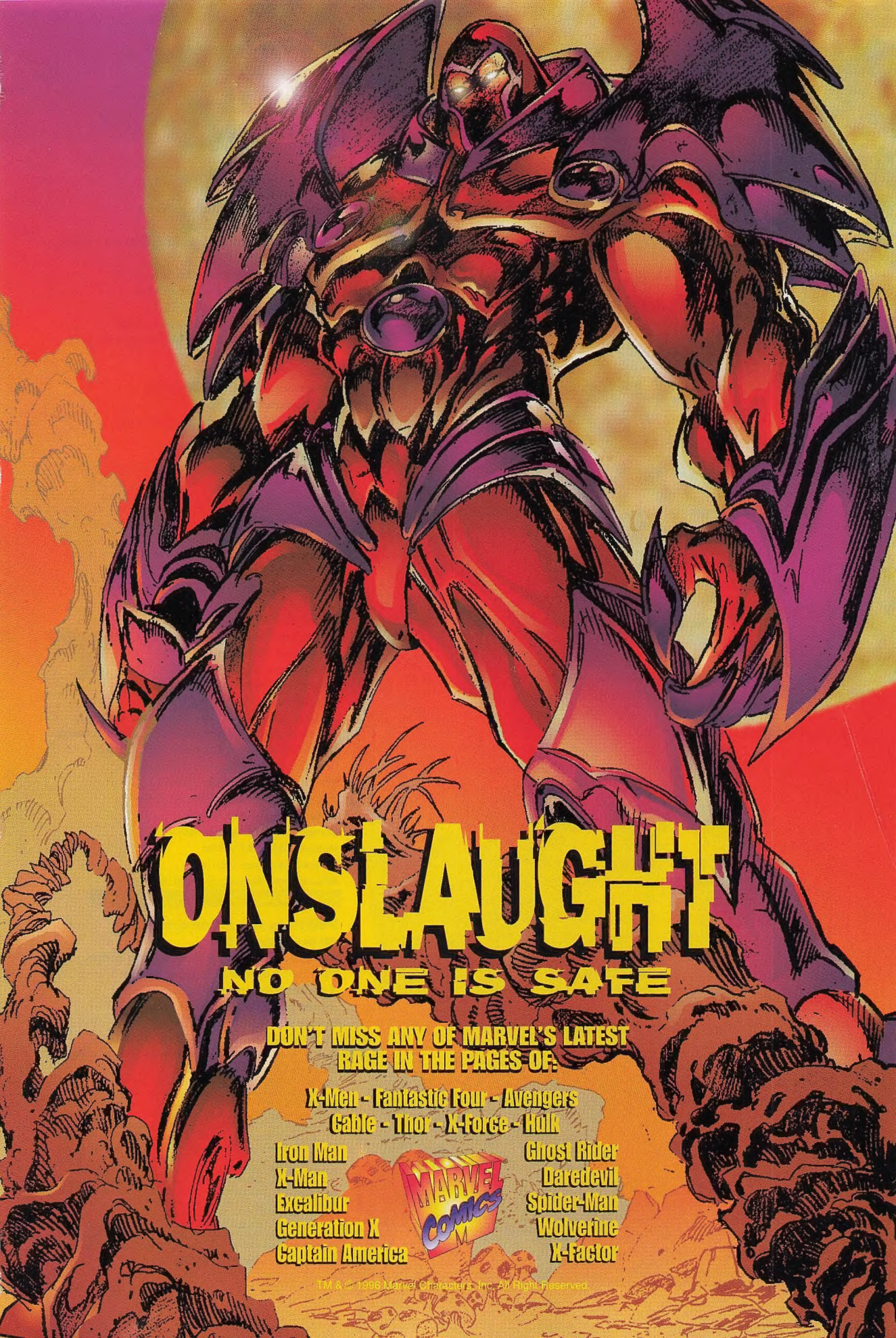
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GAREB GETS TWO THUMBS DOWN...

WELL, BLOW ME DOWN

About six months ago, when I was up at DC's offices, they asked me if I was ready to be blown away. Now, you know how hard it must be to blow me away; I see artwork all day long. Well, DC was right, the *Kingdom Come* artwork by Alex Ross was just astounding. From that moment on, I knew it was going to be BIG. This month, we take you behind the scenes with Alex for an exclusive peek into his *Kingdom Come* sketchbook—there's no way you can pass up this article!

I was at the big Toy Fair in New York City recently—talk about a kid in a candy store! I got an advance look at most of the figures to hit the shelves this year. Can you say "Psylocke," "White Queen" and "Mars Attacks"? And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

Todd McFarlane was in his showroom talking toys to everyone, and I saw something for the first time ever—Todd inking a *Spawn* page. Can you believe it? Todd never, ever works in front of anyone. I even told Todd that I think this is the first time *ever* that he did work in public, and he confirmed it for me. I also offered to help—I can ink much faster than he can. It wouldn't look any good, but I definitely would be faster. And his new toys look really great—isn't the Maxx one awesome?

Toy Biz has great toys coming out this year, including some awesome model kits. Anyway, read all about Toy Fair this month.

The chromium cards we're doing are a big hit. We've received tons of praise. This month we've got a first time, never-before-seen, embossed chromium image of Purgatori (Wow!).

Make sure you pick up the new *Fire From Heaven* #1/2 offer, they're going really fast and here's the *only* place you're gonna find 'em.

I hope you're hanging up our *new* monthly calendars, I am. Brian Douglas Ahern does a tremendous job with them.

The comic book industry seems to be buzzing about the new books Rob Liefeld and Jim Lee are working on for Marvel. For some of the specifics on the books, see the interview with Rob and Jim in this issue. This month we've also got a peek at the new Marvel/Image crossovers including Cable/Prophet and Spider-Man/Badrock. But I'll let you read about it for yourself.

Enjoy the issue.

Gareb S. Shamus

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Number 57
MAY 1996

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We're givin' away so many free McFarlane Toys it'll make yer eyes bleed!

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Win a bunch of original art, signed books and cool stuff like that.

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80 FIRE FROM HEAVEN #1/2
Hommina, hommina, hommina! Here's your only chance to get the galaxy-spannin' Fire From Heaven #1/2 comic, featuring a peek into Damocles' dimension. And you better believe this issue ties directly into this summer's huge WildStorm crossover series!

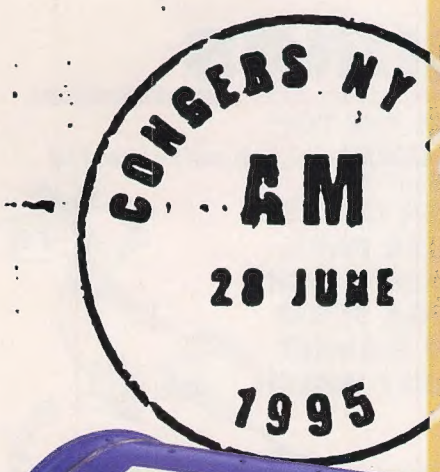
MAGIC WORDS

You Guys Got Talent

Without fail, there's something in the mail each and every month that blows my mind. This month it was the amazing amount of quality letter art that we got. It's a crying shame that we can only print four envelopes. There were many more readers than just four who deserved recognition for the great art they sent in this month. So I decided to send a few extra goodies to several selected readers who didn't make the cut. You'll know who you are when you get a package in the mail.

On a completely unrelated note, Steve Thomas of Clinton, Ill. sent a letter on some incredibly cool Robert Crumb stationery this month and I will love him forever for it.

We start this month with one of those goll-durned "industry backbiting" letters...



Who's the Real Poser?

Dear Wizard,

I know people have been ripping on Rob Liefeld for "swiping" other people's artwork for years. I won't comment on that. It's not my department.

But I just read *Wizard* #53 and saw Liefeld "swipe" my signature pose, the "Dead Elvis," on the table of contents! Just check issue #46, page 47, for the *real* first *Wizard* appearance of my pose. This swipe is absolute blasphemy!

Brian Pulido
President, Chaos! Comics
Scottsdale, AZ

Can you really "swipe" a pose? I just don't know. Oh, well. Looks like the possibility of a Lady Death/Youngblood crossover just went out the window.

What a Nice Young Man

Dear Cranky Wizard Types,

Here's what I'm thankful for, comic-wise:

1) Warren Ellis. His British sarcasm and bitterness is in full effect in *X-Calibre*, *Ruins* and *Thor*. He's creepy too.

2) Evan Dorkin. Milk and Cheese make me bust out laughing every time, and the *Instant Piano* stuff I caught was great. This guy is the kidney punch that comics (and readers!) deserve.

3) Mike Baron and Steve Rude on *Nexus*. Why doesn't everyone read this? It's got a damn "X" in it, doesn't it? It must be too good.

4) Peter David, for *Incredible Hulk* and *The Last Avengers Story*.

5) Chris Claremont for his *Aliens vs. Predator*. A two-year limited series? It's still quite good if you sit down with all 12 issues and a mess of coffee. Trade paperback, anyone?

6) Surprisingly good books: *Skrull Kill Krew*, *Egypt*, *Millennium Fever*, *Battlestar Galactica* (Who'da thunk?), *Scud*, *Mars Attacks*, *Ghost*, *Man-Bat*, *Static*, *Madman*, *The Nocturnals*, *X-Man*, *Optic Nerve* and *Mike Danger*.

Well, enough pleasantries.

Chuck Topley
Missoula, MT

P.S. I noticed in your 50th issue that you've never printed a letter from Montana, "The Treasure State." That's because I'm the only one here that knows how to read. Of course, I'm joking. There are actually at least a dozen who can, but most of them can't write with anything but crayons.

Hey! It's kind of nice to actually get a nice letter for once. I agree with pretty much all your points. Warren Ellis and Evan Dorkin are great big fun. And while I personally am not a big fan of Nexus or Peter David, I constantly see positive mail on both of them. [LETTERS GUY NOTE: My dead-reckoning count on the mail tells me that Peter David is the most popular comic writer around today.]

P.S. Let the record show that the great and sovereign state of Montana, exporter of copper ore and boycotter of nonunion lettuce, is finally represented in "Magic Words."

THESE LETTERS ARE GUARANTEED HAND-PICKED FOR FRESHNESS

To Hell and Back!
ARTEMIS
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6 issues starring the Amazon warrior.
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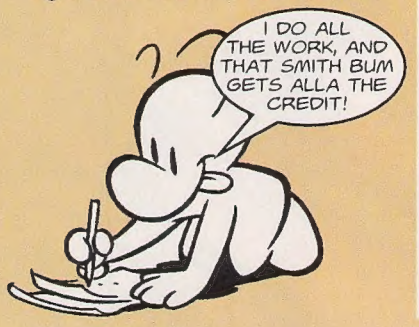
Physics and You

If nothing can move the Blob and nothing can stop the Juggernaut, what happens if the Juggernaut runs into the Blob?

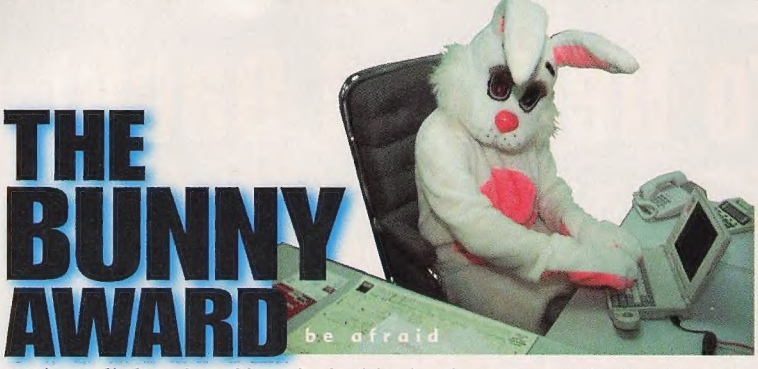
Matt Weiner
Midlothian, VA
GdAmThrawn@aol.com

Noise. Big noise.

On a related note, you may want to check out Marvel Fanfare #7 for a pretty-darned-cool tale similar to this scenario involving the Blob and Unus the Untouchable.



THE BUNNY AWARD



Paul Schiraldi

Jim takes one of his favorite letters of the month and spotlights it here. There's no logic attached to this nor is there a prize.

Leggo My Eggo!

Dear Wizard,

In *Wizard* #47, you explained what philosopher René Descartes' "cogito ergo sum" (I think, therefore I am) means. Recently, while I was cruising the Net, I found some guy who had the audacity to write "cogito eggo sum" and define it as "I think, therefore I am a waffle." I propose we organize an army, track this guy down and beat the living hell out of him.

Tom Alberts
kalberts@eid.awinc.com

Okay, but I get to be the tactical sergeant in this little army. I say we get us a big bottle o' Aunt Jemima and carve this guy up! How dare he desecrate Descartes?

Bone of Contention

All-Knowing Info-Wizards,

Now that the almighty Image is publishing *Bone*, my local shop carries it. I bought the first issue and really enjoyed it. *Bone* is a fine distraction from today's dark and violent books that seem to be so popular. If you read it (and you should) it will make your heart light. Now I have a couple questions:

1) Would you please ask *Bone* writer and artist Mr. Jeff Smith what type of pen or brush he uses to get such a fine and smooth line? And while you're at it, ask him what type of paper he uses.

2) Do you think that Image would consider publishing such books as *Tales of the Beanworld*?

Zachary L. Trover
Billings, MT

Now I have a couple answers:

1) Not being much of a brush guy myself, I went straight to Jeff Smith, who said, "I use a series 7 Windsor & Newton sable hair brush. Inking is done over non-photo blue pencil sketches on plate finish 2-ply Bristol board."

2) Beanworld creator/writer/artist Larry Marder is also the Executive Director of Image Comics, so you might think it would be a natural fit. But to date, no Beanworld tales have been published by Image.

Hey! Montana was just represented again! It's a regular Rocky Mountain love-in around here!

What the Hell is a Stray Toaster?

Hello,

I have seen the artwork of Bill Sienkiewicz on several trading card sets and in some magazines. I was wondering if he also works on any comics. I think his art is great and would like to see more. Thank you.

Gabriel Sisterama
Sisterama@aol.com

Y'know, we covered good ol' Bill in Wizard #50's "We Looked it Up" section of "Magic Words." But since ya asked so nicely, I'll repeat the info. Sienkiewicz, who earned his reputation as a top-flight artist during a long run on Marvel's Moon Knight in the early 1980s, is perhaps most famous for his work on Marvel's New Mutants ongoing series and the Elektra: Assassin and Stray Toasters mini-series. Recently, Sienkiewicz illustrated Voodoo Child, a Jimi Hendrix hardcover biography published by Kitchen Sink Press. He is currently working on art for some Magic: The Gathering cards and has an eight-page black-and-white Batman story in the works, which he is both writing and penciling.

A Real Yo-Yo

Dear Wizard,

My name is David Capurro and I am a national yo-yo champion. I have a few questions regarding Mike Allred's famous comic character Madman and yo-yos.

I have seen Madman pictured with a yo-yo numerous times. Does he know any yo-yo tricks? What kind of yo-yo does he use?

David Capurro
Aptos, CA

Not being much of a yo-yo guy myself (although I have often been accused of actually being a yo-yo), I went straight to Mike Allred, who said, "Frank 'Madman' Einstein knows every yo-yo trick in the book, although he can't remember them all. He uses an early, heavy wood yo-yo of the antique variety that has been used so much that the brand name has been worn off, although I suspect it's a WHAM-O. He has customized it with a lead-filled center and has handmade a larger version for Batarang-type swings.

"Frank has been approached by Duncan reps from Snap City to endorse an official Madman yo-yo. No word yet on this still-pending deal."

Hey! It's Pen Pals

Get in touch with your fellow comic fans! Send your name, address, age, gender and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o the Magic Words address on page 12. **NOTE: Please write your age clearly on the envelope.** Hey, make a friend!

PEN PALS

Shawn P. Green
Age: 13 Sex: Male
1121 W. Graythorn Pl.
Tucson, AZ 85737
Likes: X-titles, *Spawn*, *WildC.A.T.s*

William Prettyman
Age: 13 Sex: Male
7660 U.S. Highway 17
Williamston, NC 27892
Likes: *X-Men Adventures*, *X-Men*, *Uncanny X-Men*

Wrey Martinson
Age: 12 Sex: Male
640 East 9th
Alliance, NE 69301
Likes: All X-titles, *Spawn*, *Wolverine*

Justin Wright
Age: 11 Sex: Male
2124 11th Ave. N.
Texas City, TX 77590
Likes: *Gen*^{13}, X-titles, *Spider-Man*

Justin Stowe
Age: 15 Sex: Male
1421 S.E. 4th Ave.
Deerfield Beach, FL 33441
Likes: All Verotik titles, *Akira*

Brian Athey
Age: 15 Sex: Male
1113 N. Terrace Rd.
Chandler, AZ 85226
Likes: *Ranma 1/2*, *Robotech*, any anime/manga

Saskia Uit den Bogaard
Age: 24 Sex: Female
Godelindestraat 56
1402 WL BUSSUM
The Netherlands
Likes: *Wolverine*, X-titles, *Spider-Man*

Fanzines are Fun

Dear Sarge,

As one of the biggest Iron Man fans on planet Earth, I thrilled to the letter in *Wizard* #53 by Johnathan Hernandez and your response about Iron Man as a household laundry appliance. Well, m'man, there is a precedent for this.

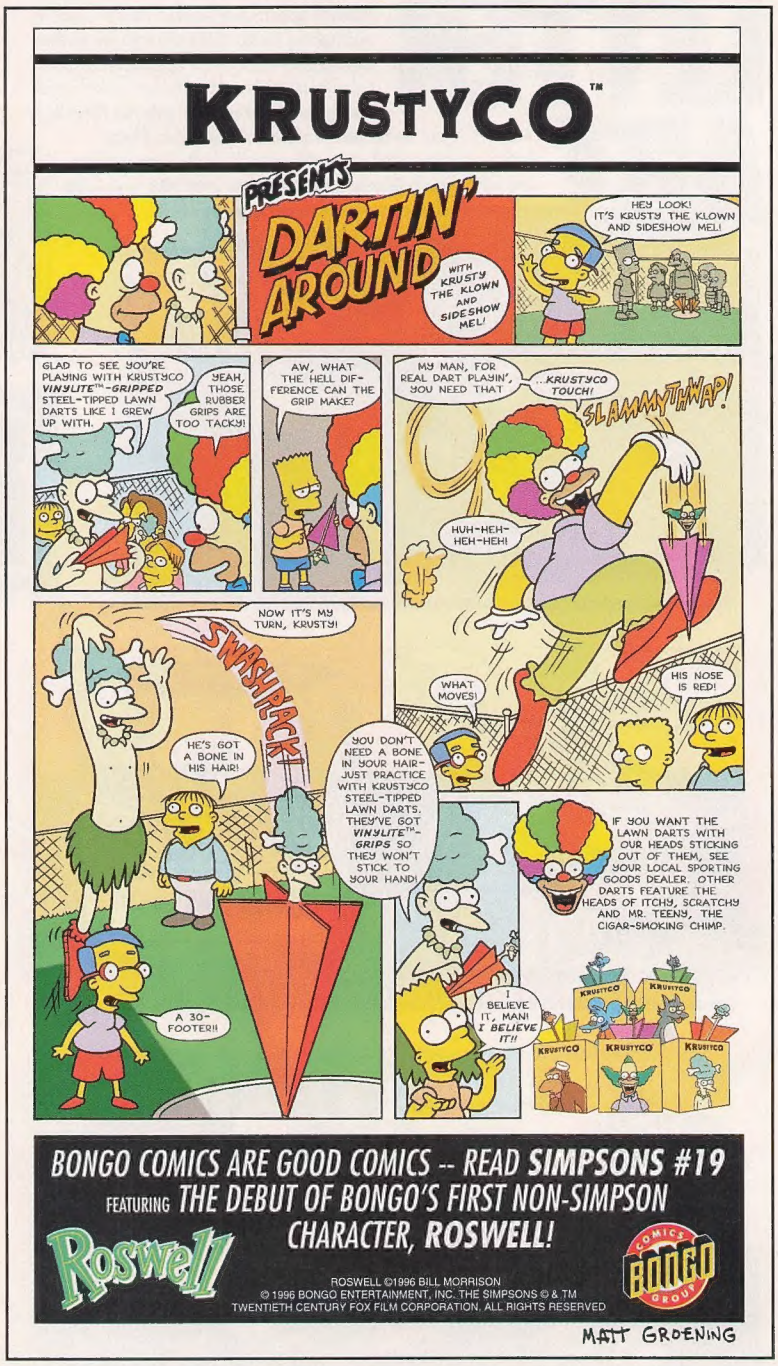
Check out the back cover of the enclosed *Iron Fan Bulletin* and enjoy with my compliments *The Unrinsable Ironing Man* and his various household armors! Ironing Man was created by my friend Robert Sumner back in 1992. In fact, *Iron Fan Bulletin* was created and produced by Robert Sumner. I wrote a column for *IFB* called "Stark Remarks." Although publication of *IFB* was suspended, I continue to write a monthly "Stark Remarks" column for *Advanced Iron*, an Iron Man fanzine produced and edited by Bill Egan. (10341 Leola Court #1, Cupertino, CA 95014. If possible, we'd appreciate a plug.)

I know Robert Sumner wouldn't mind—shoot, he'd do a cartwheel!—if you were to show off his Ironing Man stuff in *Wizard*, as long as you mentioned his name.

And thank you, thank you for the Iron Man feature article in *Wizard* #54! All of us Iron Fans appreciate it!

Mike Kalibabky
Chisholm, MN

No problem. For the uninitiated among you, fanzines like this are usually very cool if you're into the subject matter. So all you Iron Fans out there should write to Bill Egan. Any other 'zines out there? Send 'em my way, along with full information on how our readers can get them, and we'll see if we can plug a few more here.



An Art Groupie

Dear Folks at Wizard,

The reason for this letter is to ask for some assistance in a matter no one has been able to help me with yet. Looking through some "pinup" books (the *Lobo Gallery* and *Lady Death in Lingerie*, in particular), I spotted some really cool pages by artists that I haven't heard of before: Jim Balent and "Dark One." If you could help me find some of these artists' regular books, if any, it would be greatly appreciated. Thanks for your time.

Fred Dufort
Petrolia, Ontario, Canada

The artist known as "Dark One" is actually Greg Williams, who does Animal Mystic for Sirius Entertainment. Greg has an Animal Mystic: 3rd Eye pinup book scheduled to ship in April and a new all-color Animal Mystic series

PENPALS

Amber Cantwell
Age: 18 Sex: Female
3933 Walnut Blvd. #12
Brentwood, CA 94513
Likes: *The Maxx, Archie, Batman*

Kwannon Fox
Age: 17 Sex: Female
3760 Bearhill Rd.
Grantsville, MD 21536
Likes: *Spawn, WildC.A.T.s, X-titles*

Cory You
Age: 17 Sex: Male
3655 Sunset Blvd., Apt. #17
Rocklin, CA 95677
Likes: Image; interested in self-publishing

William Gravenor
Age: 20 Sex: Male
20 Bonnetts Rd.
Kaitaia, New Zealand
Likes: *Spider-Man, Lobo, X-Men*

Amanda Flood
Age: 15 Sex: Female
5614-55 AST
Wetaskiwin, Alberta, Canada T9A 2A9
Likes: All X-titles, *Wolverine, Gambit*

Mark Caringer
Age: 15 Sex: Male
7125 Seville Ave.
Highland, CA 92346
Likes: *Wolverine, X-Men, Weapon X*

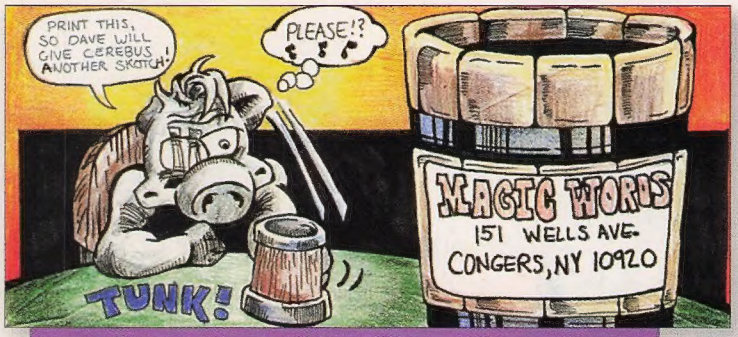
Joel Lieberman
Age: 32 Sex: Male
P.O. Box 2261
River Vale, NJ 07675
Likes: *X-Men, Excalibur, Lobo*

LETTER ART

Fans who get their letter art printed will each receive a copy of *Batman #0* signed by Doug Moench, a *Prime #∞* signed by Len Strazewski, the issue of *Wizard* in which their envelope appeared signed by the entire *Wizard* creative staff, and a funky *Wizard* cap! The creator of the best envelope wins all that neat stuff, *plus* an original art page from *Web of Spider-Man #128* by your friendly neighborhood Steven Butler. **Artists: Please include a clearly printed return address on the *back* of your envelope.** And special thanks to Steven for donating that kickin' Grand Prize!

envelope of the month

THE DEMON Shawn Jennings Norfolk, England



CEREBUS Steve Black Cambridge, OH

GREEN LANTERN Thomas H. Fendenheim Barnesville, OH

SCUD AND DRYWALL Ronnie Callejo Metairie, LA

entitled **Water Wars** *slated for July release.*

Jim Balent is a tall guy, former gravedigger and current monthly penciler for DC's **Catwoman** *and* **Chaos! Comics' Purgatori.** *He has also done three* **Wizard** *covers. (Oh, all right, they're adorning issues #33, #34 and #48. So don't say I never told ya nuthin'!)*

Card Mating

Dear Wizard,

A few months ago, you told someone that *Wizard* cards are made when two *Wizard* cards, a mommy card and a daddy card, go off for a round of special petting. Well, I took two of my *Wizard* cards (a ShadowHawk card and a WildStar card) and left them alone in a room for a few days and waited. Nothing happened. Heck, after a few months, nothing happened. So I figured that maybe you had to have identical *Wizard* cards for proper breeding. So I got another WildStar card. Again, I got the same results: nothing.

Then it hit me. All the cards you have released have been of males, and two male cards can't proliferate! So, come on! Give a guy a break! Release some female cards already!

Kirk Alexander
Nashville, TN

Done and done. We had an Angela card last month, we've got Purgatori going in this issue, and Gen[13]'s Fairchild makes an appearance on next month's card.

And it was "special hugging," not "special petting." Get it right. What do you take us for here? A bunch of perverts?

Work Ethic

Dear Wizard,

Are you a bunch of ornery drunk guys who like comics or do you guys do this for the money?

Brian Klein
Humble, TX

Well, we don't make much money, so that can't be the answer. We do like comics a lot, although we are never ornery and are rarely drunk before 10 a.m.

Hey, whaddaya know? It just passed 10 a.m. Which way to the mimosas? I'm outta here...

—Jim McLauchlin

Jim McLauchlin drank Bombay Sapphire gin in the making of this month's "Magic Words," even though he prefers Tanqueray and was all out of limes. What a trooper!

Send letters to:
Magic Words
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920
or e-mail us at WizardTGTC@AOL.Com

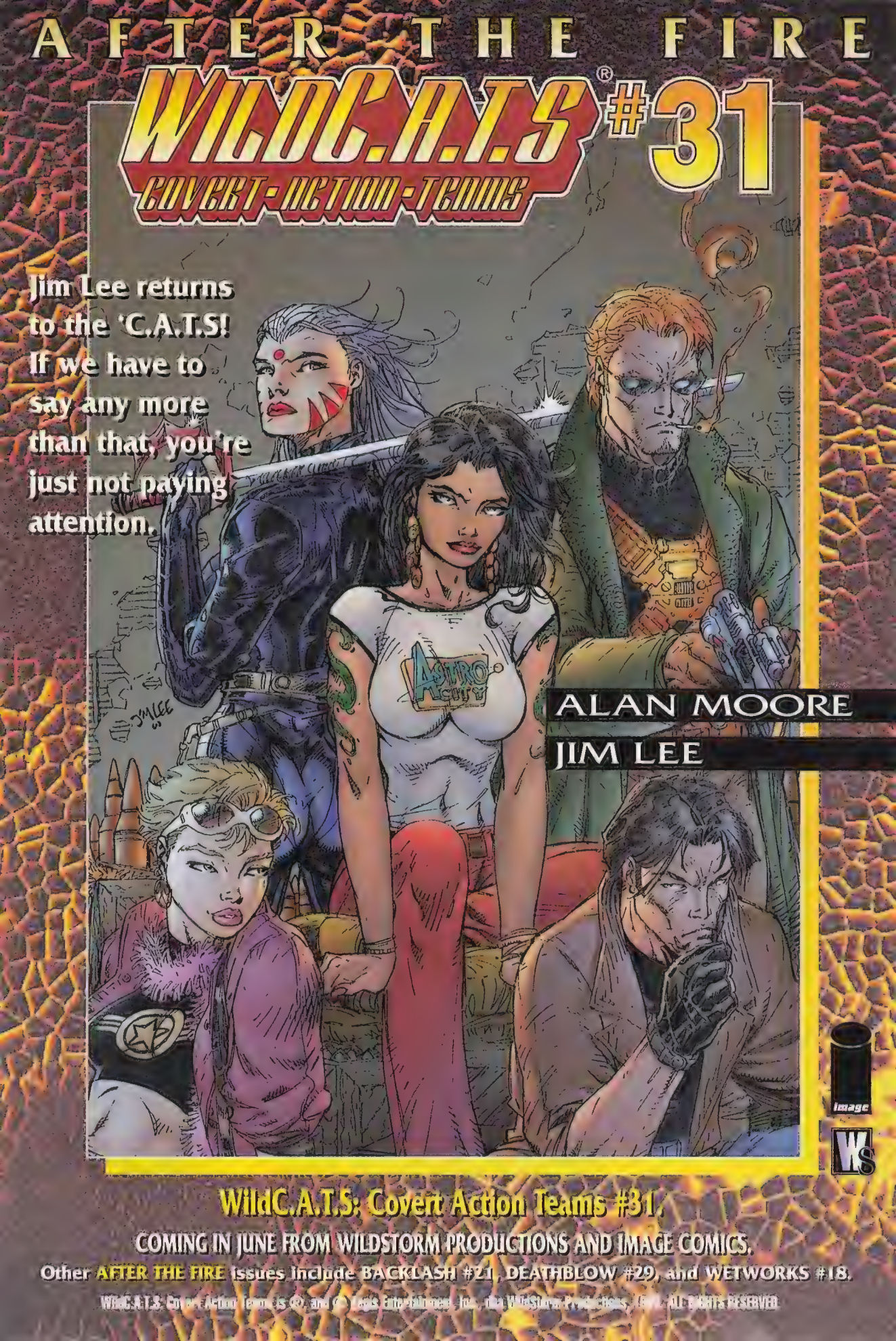
WHAT IT TAKES №12

What's it take to make a great comic book?

GREEN HAIR.

MESSALINA
as featured in the pages of
NEIL GAIMAN'S
PHAGE™
SHADOW DEATH

BIG ENTERTAINMENT


AFTER THE FIRE
WILDC.A.T.S® #31
COVERT-ACTION-TEAMS
Jim Lee returns to the 'C.A.T.S! If we have to say any more than that, you're just not paying attention.
ALAN MOORE
JIM LEE
WildC.A.T.S: Covert Action Teams #31.
COMING IN JUNE FROM WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS AND IMAGE COMICS.
Other AFTER THE FIRE issues include BACKLASH #21, DEATHBLOW #29, and WETWORKS #18.
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SEND OUT THE CLONES

Cat-crushing craze sweeping through America's youth. "First we put 'em in pants, then we squeeze 'em," said cat lover. NOTE: Cat squeezing is illegal in every state except Oregon.

New line of Mr. Potato Head costumes pitched to Hasbro. "We aren't going with it," said spokesman. "In fact, we had to, um, deep fry the guy in this photo."

Preliminary sketches for Jim Lee's new Iron Man armor accidentally leaked out. "What do you mean he's just a guy with a Lite-Brite on his chest?" asked a defensive Lee.

Comics' most talked about identity crisis is coming to a close as the real **Spider-Man** finds...himself. And fans want it that way.

"We listen to our fans," said **Marvel** Editor-in-Chief **Bob Harras**, "and they have spoken. It's back to basics. We are right now developing a storyline where we are going to put **Peter Parker** back into a Spider-Man costume."

Within the past year, fans learned that the Peter Parker they've followed for the past 20 years was not the real Spider-Man but a clone. The real Parker, now known as **Ben Reilly**, was discovered to be the true Spidey. And now, even *that* fact is put into question yet again. And these revelations have not been sitting well with fans.

But Spider-Man editor **Ralph Macchio** is confident that the conclusion to the clone saga will be a success. "Writers Tom DeFalco, Howard Mackie and Todd Dezago will be working with me and with Bob Harras to make the whole thing fit together and to finish the story."

Macchio said he needs to keep the same creative staff in the loop "because they're the only ones who really know the storyline since the beginning." But when writer/penciler **Dan Jurgens** leaves *Sensational Spider-Man* with #6, he will be replaced by writer Dezago and then with regular penciler Mike Wieringo (*Robin*) on #8.

As for when the clone saga will be resolved, Harras hinted that Marvel's upcoming "Onslaught" crossover story will help get Peter back into the Spidey costume.

And what of Mary Jane and the baby's fate? Before quickly getting off the topic, Harras smiled and mumbled, "Well, I can't tell you that..."

As for the titles' direction beyond the clone story, Harras said, "My personal concern with the line of books is that it had one of the best supporting casts in comics. Over time, it has been stripped away. We're trying to recreate a cast for Peter to live with and create a world that was stripped away. I read Spider-Man as much to see what happens to Peter and Mary Jane as [to see] who he was going to fight that month."

Macchio's philosophy is simple: "The Spider-Man books are the story of a guy getting through life with the added responsibilities of superpowers. The books are not just about Spider-Man, they're about Peter Parker. Over the next six months, we will get back to what Spider-Man should be. I hope that the fans will hang on and give us a chance." ■ *Ruth Morrison*

ahead

MARVEL VS. IMAGE!

THE NEW JUSTICE LEAGUE!

BE THE NEW VAMPIRELLA!

AND COMPANY UPDATES!

SUPERMAN CO-CREATOR JERRY SIEGEL DIES

Comic legend 'was as good and noble a creature as his creation, Superman

Most of today's fans know him as only a name on the splash page of every **Superman** story. But it's probably a safe bet that not one of them would be a comic book fan today if it weren't for **Jerry Siegel**.

Together with boyhood friend **Joe Shuster**, Jerry Siegel created Superman, and through Superman, created an industry.

Siegel was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1917 and met Shuster in high school there. They came up with the idea for Superman and had it developed before they graduated in 1934. They spent four years trying to sell their inspiration to the newspaper syndicates with repeated rejections. "Jerry saved a lot of his old correspondence with the syndicates that turned down Superman," current Superman writer **Roger Stern** said. "This is from an editor at United Features: 'It's an immature piece of work, attractive because of its freshness and naiveté, but this is likely to wear off after the feature runs for a while.' "

In the meantime, the two had begun producing work for the fledgling **DC Comics** in ***Detective Comics***. Finally, in early 1938, Siegel and Shuster sold the rights to Superman to DC for a reported $130, as well as a contract to supply the publisher with material. The first story, a repasting of newspaper strip samples, appeared in ***Action Comics*** #1.

By 1940, only a year and a half after its first appearance, Superman was being printed in three different comics—*Action Comics, Superman* and *World's Finest Comics*—along with a popular radio serial and, by 1941, a cartoon series.

The Siegel/Shuster team was well compensated for its work, by the standards of the time, but they didn't own their creation. That initial small payment had included all rights. In 1945, while Siegel and Shuster were in military service, DC spun off the **Superboy** series in *More Fun Comics*, without compensating the creators of the Man of Steel. On their return, Siegel and Shuster successfully sued for a piece of Superboy, reportedly getting $100,000, but it soured relations with DC and, in 1948, DC refused to renew their contract and took their creator credit off the feature.

"His works have almost been overshadowed by the magnitude of the injustice done to him and to Joe Shuster," said comics writer/artist and theorist **Scott McCloud**, author of *Understanding Comics*. "He created an entire branch of American literature; however, it may have been hijacked, that legacy is still with us."

In 1978, with the release of the first Superman film, prominent comics artist **Neal Adams** and a number of other comics creators began a campaign to get Siegel and Shuster the recognition they deserved and financial compensation. Under pressure from new corporate parent Warner Communications, DC relented: Siegel and Shuster's creator credit was restored to the Superman feature and both were granted a yearly stipend, originally reported to be $20,000 per year each, and reportedly much higher by the time of their deaths. (Shuster died in 1992.)

"Despite all the raw deals they may have gotten over the years, there's no way they could ever be adequately paid for what they did; that amount of money doesn't exist in the world," added Stern. "They gave us Superman, they gave us a legend."

A surprisingly emotional tribute came from **J. Michael Straczynski**, creator of television's "**Babylon 5**" and a major Superman collector. "When I was a kid, Superman was It. Because of that singular character—invulnerable, unstoppable, whose single goal was to find the right thing and do it—I decided that I could do anything I set my mind to doing. And now the man who created Superman is gone, and somebody ought to say something, however silly or indulgent or maudlin it might be seen by others. Because it's the right thing to do."

■ *Patrick Daniel O'Neill*

Jerry Siegel (1917-1996)

MARVEL AND IMAGE TO MEET THIS SUMMER

The Marvel and Image Universes are set to collide head-on this June with a series of inter-company crossovers planned.

Highlights include Youngblood/X-Force, X-Men/WildC.A.T.s, Gen[13]/Generation X, according to Extreme Studios, and Badrock team-ups with both Spider-Man and Wolverine.

Continuing the tone set by Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld's return to Marvel on *Fantastic Four/Iron Man* and *Captain America/The Avengers*, the events will reunite characters and creators that have been long separated. Fans will be able to see Lee draw the X-Men and Liefeld draw Cable and X-Force once more.

"It's been a long time coming, but the wait is finally over," said Liefeld. "I couldn't be more excited."

Kicking off the crossovers will be *Prophet/Cable* shipping in June. The story is written by *Prophet* scribe Chuck Dixon and co-plotted and illustrated by Liefeld, the creator of both characters.

"This is the first time I've done Cable solo, and it's an opportunity that I'm really looking forward to," added Liefeld.

Other crossovers slated for 1996 release are:

• *Youngblood/X-Force:* Written by *Youngblood*'s Eric Stephenson and illustrated by Roger Cruz

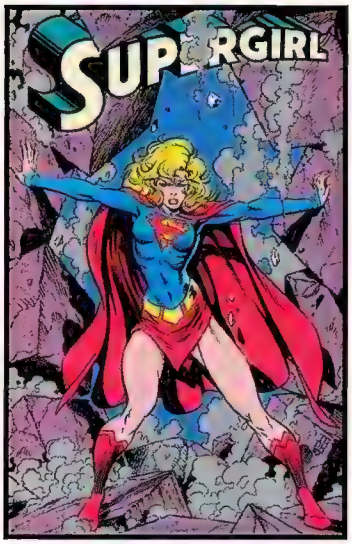
• *Badrock/Spider-Man:* Written by Dan Jurgens and drawn by Marat Mychaels and Al Vey

• *Badrock/Wolverine:* Written by Jim Valentino and drawn by Chap Yaep.

Future announcements are expected involving ShadowHawk and the Savage Dragon. ■ *John B. Lacey*

Spider-Man and Badrock

Maid of Steel set to Return in July



DC will add to its Superbooks this July when **Supergirl** gets her own ongoing series. **Peter David** will write the heroines' adventures, **Gary Frank** will pencil, and Chris Duffy will give his editorial blessing to the whole thing.

Supergirl won't be all new, but David hinted that she will be slightly retooled. "She's going to be something new, and yet...something old. Just like a wedding," David laughed.

Originally, Supergirl was **Matrix**, a shapeshifting blob of protoplasm that could become invisible and fire mental blasts. Matrix closely associated with Superman, and even assumed Superman's identity on Earth during his self-imposed exile in space. Since Superman's return, Matrix has settled on the form of Supergirl, and played a role in many Super-events, even falling in love with **Lex Luthor**.

As the character stood, David felt she needed some changes. "I wasn't ecstatic that she could change shape," he said, "and invisibility always gives me the whim-whams. Essentially, we had a character who can generate psychokinetic blasts and turn invisible. Why would she ever be visible?"

"She'll get a link to the human race in the form of a secret identity, and a 'toning down' of her powers," Duffy explained. "She'll still be the eternal optimist, but at the same time, there will be many darker elements introduced. We'll see her in situations a lot different from those she's been in before."

Drawing these situations will be David's former *Hulk* collaborator, Gary Frank (*Black Canary and Oracle: Birds of Prey*). "Gary was one of the real lures for me to do the book," David explained. "The nice thing about Gary is that I can describe whatever range or depth of emotion I want, and Gary can pull it off."

"This is a Supergirl that will surprise a lot of people," Duffy said, "Each issue will be easy to access for the new reader, with plenty of surprises for long-time fans. We're all really excited about the project." ■ *Matthew Brady*

BUZZ BOX

The inside scoop on the comic industry

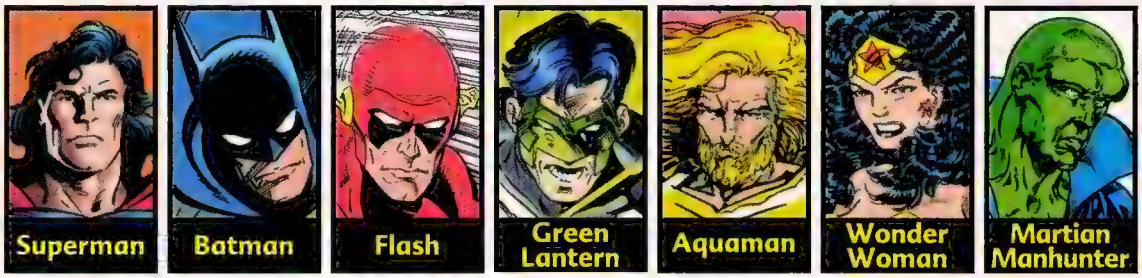
• **J. Scott Campbell** doing **Batman**? That's what Buzz heard online. When WildStorm frontman Jeff Mariotte was asked if Gen[13]'s J. Scott Campbell was working for another publisher, Mariotte responded, "I can't say anything officially yet, but J. Scott Campbell has always loved Batman." DC had no comment.

• **Jim Steranko** returning to chronicle a **Nick Fury** adventure? Possibly, as sources inside Marvel indicate the publisher is currently in talks with Steranko to do the project.

• ***Thor*** canceled? Not exactly. While the character will be absorbed into Rob Liefeld's *Avengers* title in September, *Thor* will return to its former title ***Journey Into Mystery*** following other Asgardians as they walk the Earth.

• Buzz hears rumors of a **Chris Claremont/Marc Silvestri** reunion on the **X-Men**. Well...at least on the speculated ***Star Trek: X-Men*** one-shot for **Marvel**. No one would confirm the rumors.

BATMAN and SUPERMAN Headline JUSTICE LEAGUE Revamp



Here comes the *Justice League of America*. Again.

DC Comics is going back to the drawing board to update one of its most enduring series, with some of its heaviest hitters filling out the ranks. As the current Justice League family of titles draws to a close in May and June (*Justice League America* #113, *Extreme Justice* #18 and *Justice League Task Force* #37 are the confirmed last issues), DC is set to consolidate and revamp the JLA with fan-favorite writer **Grant Morrison** (*Doom Patrol*, *The Invisibles*) helming the adventures. Rising star **Howard Porter**, fresh from his work on *Underworld Unleashed*, will pencil the series, with John Dell finishing the artwork.

Justice League of America #1 is tentatively set to premiere in October, following the July release of ***Justice League: A Midsummer's Nightmare***, a three-issue 48-page mini-series which editor Ruben Diaz describes as a prologue to the ongoing title. Co-authored by industry faves **Mark Waid** and **Fabian Nicieza**, and drawn by Darick Robertson and Jeff Johnson, *A Midsummer's Nightmare* marks Nicieza's first DC work, as well as the debut of a new cosmic villain in the DC firmament, Knowman. Diaz also notes that a classic JLA foe will return to challenge the team in an epic struggle where the villain has "the Justice League believing themselves to exist in a world without heroes." Justice League and Vertigo fans might hazard a guess to the identity of this reality-altering villain.

In the ongoing title, fans can look forward to a team comprised nearly entirely of the original lineup. As a number of current Leaguers get their walking papers—some by choice, others excluded from membership—Diaz remarks that the new JLA's role call will look like a grocery list of DC's most powerful and best loved heroes—**Superman, Batman, Flash, Green Lantern, Aquaman, Wonder Woman** and the **Martian Manhunter**, with membership to grow.

And with a roster like that, writer Grant Morrison admits a great deal of excitement in tackling the work. "I know that you can't go wrong with it because we're dealing with the major superhero icons of the last 50 years," he said. "The Justice League are a group where practically every member is known by people who don't even read comics. So I think it transcends every other superhero book on the market because of the sheer power of the recognition factor for those characters." And to bring a new relevancy to the book, Morrison promises "a kind of real spooky, apocalyptic, end-of-the-world feel, where these guardians are all that stand between humanity and disaster. And they're constantly vigilant." ■ *Scott Beatty*

We Looked It Up

Photo by Al Ortego

Ba•cha•lo (Bih cheh' lo), Chris n. 1965-present: 1 comic book artist known for his distinct, friendly and animated style on such titles as *Death: The High Cost of Living*, *Death: The Time of Your Life*, *Shade, The Changing Man*. Currently penciling *Generation X* 2 At one time, wrongly confused with the dreaded botulism poison that causes paralysis and often death

ASTRO CITY Becomes First Homage Comic

Kurt Busiek's Astro City, which had its first six issues published last year by **Image Comics**, will begin again in August. It will become the first title for **Homage Comics**, a new creator-owned imprint from **WildStorm Studios**, writer/artist Jim Lee's publishing arm.

A trade paperback reprinting those first six issues will appear in June or July, with a Vol. 2, #1 issue appearing in August. In it, a "major, major threat, on the magnitude of Galactus," menaces the world of *Astro City*. "It will introduce the wide spectrum of life in Astro City and help explain why anyone would want to live there," Busiek said. "It will offer a stand-alone introduction to the series and present the stage I'm working on."

That will be followed by a two-part focus on the **First Family**, who've only been glimpsed so far. "We'll learn all of their names, histories and origins," Busiek promised. The story focuses on Astra, the young female who can become an energy being. "She's the third generation of superhero, someone who's always been surrounded by a superhero family," he said. "We'll see how that affects her." The adventure will be seen from Astra's viewpoint, continuing the original series' approach of using a personal but changing point-of-view character in each story.

Next will come the title's first long arc, a six-issue story examining the role of sidekicks. It presents a young boy who arrives in Astro City excited about breaking into the superhero game. "He wants to become a sidekick and work his way up from there," Busiek explained. "He'll learn it's not quite what he thought, in both good and bad ways."

The new Homage Comics line will publish "the best comics out there that don't fit into the WildStorm corner of the Image Universe," explained Jeff Mariotte, WildStorm marketing director. That includes other genres besides superheroes, he noted. Discussions with creators are underway, and additions to the line should be announced soon. Like Extreme Studio's Maximum Press, Homage Comics will not be part of the Image imprint. ■ *Craig Shutt*

HE LOOKED TO THE SKY.

HE DARED TO DREAM.

HE GAVE US AN ICON.

AND HE TAUGHT US TO FLY.

JERRY SIEGEL

1914-1996

THE FAMILY OF DC COMICS JOINS THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF JERRY SIEGEL IN MOURNING HIS LOSS.

Hogarth, Baily, Jones, Die

The comics industry was beset by tragedy in January. In addition to the death of Superman co-creator **Jerry Siegel** [see page 12], it also marked the passing of two Golden Age greats and a contemporary star.

Burne Hogarth, renowned for his work on the "**Tarzan**" newspaper comic strip in the 1940s and for a series of respected art instruction books, died on Jan. 28, the same day as Siegel. Hogarth, 84, died in Paris, where he was staying following his appearance as guest of honor at the Angouleme Festival.

Hogarth began his career at the Associated Editors Syndicate in 1926. After several short stints on unsuccessful strips, he was chosen to replace **Hal Foster** ("Prince Valiant") on United Features' "Tarzan" strip in 1937. He stayed with the jungle lord until 1945, when he left briefly to work on his own creation, "Drago." He returned to "Tarzan" in 1947, but left soon after because of a contractual dispute over foreign rights.

Hogarth was instrumental in the founding of the School of Visual Arts in New York City, still an important training ground for commercial and comics artists. But his influence goes far beyond that school: He also produced art instruction volumes, all still in print today, among them *Dynamic Anatomy*, *Drawing the Human Head*, and *Dynamic Figure Drawing*.

His importance can probably be judged by the words of the prominent comics artists who count themselves among his fans. "I have probably met more people in this business who learned their craft from his books on art and drawing than I can count," said **Neal Adams**. "And that's a tremendous legacy."

For **Walt Simonson**, now a part-time instructor at SVA, the influence was more immediate. "Like everybody else in my generation, I bought a copy of *Dynamic Anatomy* when I was very young and it was one of my first art textbooks," he recalled. "It wasn't until after I was a professional that I actually saw any of his comics work."

Ironically, **Bernard Baily**, who died at the age of 75 only a few days before Siegel, was a collaborator with the Superman writer as well. Together, Siegel and Baily created the **Spectre** in 1940, putting together the ghostly hero's first appearance in *More Fun Comics* #52. Baily drew the strip for its entire Golden Age run, until it was canceled in 1945.

Baily also worked on DC's science-fiction and mystery titles of the 1950s and '60s, notably on the Prince Ra-Man series in ***House of Mystery***. He retired in the early 1970s.

Inker **Malcolm Jones III**, best known for his work on the early issues of ***The Sandman***, died early in January. Details on his death are still unknown. In addition to his *Sandman* work, Jones also contributed to *The Question* and other DC titles throughout the 1980s and '90s. ■ *PDO*

company updates

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM

Cerebus #205, which ships this April, has the trouble-makin' aardvark contemplate turning over a new leaf after reflecting on his life. ... June sees the release of the next Cerebus phone book, *The Minds*, which collects issues #187-#200.

ABSTRACT STUDIOS

Look for a Strangers in Paradise card set this summer from Comic Images, containing artwork from creator Terry Moore as well as a number of guests. ... For *SiP* fanatics, Moore will be doing eight pages of art for a "Wolf & Red" story in Dark Horse's *Tex Avery's Comics and Stories* #1 shipping in April. He's also writing a brand-new series for Extreme Studios this May, based on Lady Supreme.

ARCHIE COMICS

The company's May highlights include *Archie's All Canadian Digest* #1 (in which Archie and his pals look back on several Canadian trips) and *Archie & Friends* #19 (featuring a parody of the show "ER").

ARIA PRESS

Colleen Doran's self-publishing guide *101 Things Your Publisher Doesn't Want You to Know* book will finally ship in April, the same month her *Visions of a Distant Soil* pinup book is due.

BIG ENTERTAINMENT

BIG's Tekno•Comic line is starting over with all #1s and #0s in April, and is celebrating this relaunch with a huge crossover event. One four-page chapter of a special story will appear in each of Tekno's March and April issues, concluding with *Lady Justice* #1. ... A deluxe edition of the *From Dusk till Dawn* adaptation ships in May, featuring tons of behind-the-scenes material and exclusive interviews with the creators. It's 64 pages for $9.95.

BONEYARD PRESS

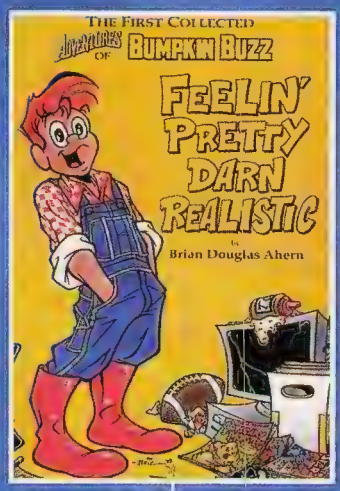
Starting this June, Boneyard will be releasing a three-issue mini-series based on the *Vampire Lust* card set that spotlighted all live models. The monthly mini-series will be drawn by *Vampirella*'s Kirk Van Wormer.

BONGO COMICS

May sees the release of Zongo's second title, Mary Fleener's new hip and humorous creation *Fleener*. Currently, Zongo plans to publish *Fleener* biannually.

BROADWAY COMICS

In May ships *Babes of Broadway* #1, a pinup book featuring artwork by Alan Davis, Hoang Nguyen, Mike Kaluta and many more. It



retails for $2.95. ... Broadway releases its fourth ongoing core title this June, with *City Perilous* #1. It stars the Knights of Broadway and Tammy Neil, a 12-year-old genius who believes she's the reincarnation of Morgan Le Fay and rounds up a group of warriors to save the world from destruction.

CALIBER PRESS

Due out in May is *Bumpkin Buzz: Feelin' Pretty Darn Realistic*, a collection of Brian Douglas Ahern's "Adventures of Bumpkin Buzz," found weekly in *Comics Buyer's Guide* since 1991.

CHAOS! COMICS

Get ready for the showdown ... Lady Death vs. Kali, the Hindu Goddess, coming in May. *Lady Death: The Odyssey* #3 pits Lady Death against the Goddess of Order and Chaos, who is on a mad, cannibalizing rampage. Kali takes aim at Lady Death, but the Diva of Death balks at becoming dinner. Find out who wins in the tussle in this issue, written by Brian Pulido and illustrated by Steven Hughes. ... Smiley, The Psychotic Button gets his own poster in May, featuring his catch phrase, "Have a Psychotic Day!"

COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

Although the CBLDF was able to dissolve most of their legal bills, Michael Kennedy and John Hunter closed their Oklahoma City comic store Planet Comics in February, after months of trials stemming from charges of selling obscene material. All proceeds from Defense Con '96 — to be held at the Oklahoma Fairgrounds on May 11 and 12 by Chaos! Comics — will benefit the CBLDF, which will continue to financially support Kennedy and Hunter as they await an April hearing.

DARK HORSE COMICS

Dark Horse has some neat Star Wars stuff coming out. In May is *Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire*, written by John Wagner and drawn by Killian Plunkett and P. Craig Russell. In June there's *Star Wars: Battle of the Bounty Hunters*, which is a pop-up comic book starring Boba Fett and painted by Chris Weller. ... *Monkeyman and O'Brien* #1 (of 3) is finally expected to be released in July. Unpublished Jack Kirby artwork from the '70s will be published in the late summer by Dark Horse in a limited edition portfolio. The art is based upon images from the Old Testament. *Batman/Grendel 2* is set to debut in June. ... Actor Mark Hamill ("Star Wars") is writing a series titled *Black Pearl* for Dark Horse in June. ... Dark Horse has acquired the rights to do "graphic story albums" (written prose text

continued on page 18

"The scorching hot mini-series of '95..."
Wizard #52

THE ONGOING SERIES

AVENGELYNE™ #1

"Most sex appeal with a sword." Fan #8

"Avengelyne was woefully under ordered and back issues shot up dramatically." Combo #10

"After only a few issues, Maximum Press' Avengelyne is rocking the market." Wizard #52

GUEST STARRING THE SWASHBUCKLING

DEVLIN

FEATURING A BREATHTAKING PHOTO COVER

STORY
ROB LIEFELD
ROBERT NAPTON

ART
JOHN STINSMAN
MARLO ALQUIZA

THE COUNTDOWN TO AVENGELYNE'S BABY BEGINS!

MAXIMUM PRESS™

AVENGELYNE™ 18 ™ and © 1996 ROB LIEFELD Inc. and LITTLE WOLF PRODUCTIONS

SIMONSON, GIANNI Join Dark Horse's Legend Imprint

Two additional creators—one long rumored to be coming aboard and the other a relative newcomer to comics—have signed on with **Legend**, the creator-owned imprint published by **Dark Horse Comics**.

Walter Simonson, long-time writer/illustrator with extensive credits throughout the comics industry (including Marvel's *The Mighty Thor*), is bringing his creator-owned **Starslammers** to Legend with publication of the *Starslammers Special* in June.

The special is actually the fifth issue in the initial Starslammers story arc; the first four issues were published by Malibu Comics' Bravura imprint in 1994-95. "It includes the 26-page story originally intended for the fifth issue," said Simonson, "as well as a four-page prologue which is essentially a summary of the first four chapters, plus pinup pages by **Frank Miller** and **John Byrne**."

Simonson said he will continue the title under the Legend imprint for the foreseeable future. His next Starslammers series should appear in the fall.

The second new Legend member is **Gary Gianni**, whose recent credits include writing and drawing the *Indiana Jones: Shrine of the Sea Devil* one-shot. His first Legend work will also appear in June, as a back-up feature in **Mike Mignola**'s latest mini-series, ***Hellboy: Wake the Devil***.

"Mike and I started out discussing my adapting classic ghost and horror stories similar to the work I'd done for *Classics Illustrated*, but that evolved into an ongoing series called ***The MonsterMen***, which is the framework for supernatural adventures based on some of the classic old stories but contemporized into a modern setting."

The original six Legend members were Miller (*Sin City, Martha Washington*), Byrne (*Next Men*), Mignola (*Hellboy*), Geof Darrow (*The Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot*), Paul Chadwick (*Concrete*) and Art Adams (*Monkeyman and O'Brien*). They were later joined by Mike Allred (*Madman*). ■ *Jack Curtin*

So You Wanna Be Vampirella?

Ever dream of wearing the spandex red outfit? The thigh-high boots?

Well, you're in luck. **Harris Comics** is looking for a new spokesmodel to appear at comic conventions, trade shows and comic book stores.

If interested, ask yourself a few basic questions: Are you female? Voluptuous? Raven haired? Are you a vampire at heart?

If so, then you might be the new **Vampirella**.

"We are interested in discovering a raven-haired model who can perfectly portray the buxom comic heroine," said Harris Comics Promotion Manager **Stewart Morales**. "It's not always an easy job, but it is a lot of fun signing autographs and posing with fans while traveling around the country."

Interested young women who fit the bill should send swimsuit photos (head and body shots) along with their name, address, age, measurements and daytime phone number to: Stewart Morales, Harris Comics, 1115 Broadway, 8th Floor, NY, NY 10010. No phone calls please. All applicants will be contacted by mail.

And stay tuned to *Wizard*'s America Online service "Wizard World" for details on a special contest in which fans can help choose the next Vampirella model! ■ *Scott Gramling*

company updates

continued from page 16

accompanied by full-page illustrations) with *The X-Files* in early '97. Joe Kubert's *Fax From Sarajevo* has been postponed till October. July is Dark Horse's 10th Anniversary celebration (Has it really been that long?). It will release a seven-issue mini-series with all new material, each issue representing a specific "genre."

DC COMICS

Joey Cavalieri makes his debut as editor of the Superman line of titles in March. The next *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight Halloween Special* is so big, a one-shot can't handle it. It's expected to be a 13-issue series beginning tentatively in October. The title is, appropriately, "A Long Halloween." And just to make you feel old, this November marks the 10th anniversary of *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*.

EL CAPITÁN

May's *Stray Bullets #9* features a great story about 26 guys named Nick.

ENTITY COMICS

Foodang #1 brings Mike Duggan's humor series which stars the clown with a gun (formerly published at August House) to Entity in May. The 40-pager sports a new cover by Bart Sears. Check out Entity's new and improved site on the World Wide Web, at:
http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/entitycomics

FOUR COLOR IMAGES

The New York City gallery will be hosting a show featuring Madman artwork by Mike Allred in April, while Charles Vess' art from *Sandman #75* will be showcased in May. John Bolton's *Black Dragon* pen and ink work will be exhibited in June. For more info call (212) 431-4234, fax (212) 431-3912 or e-mail ComicArt@aol.com.

HIGH IMPACT STUDIOS

Double Impact #9, due in April, will be the final issue of the series. To mark this event, High Impact will have a variant edition available at the Chicago Comic Con that month. In July, *China & Jazz: Double Impact #1* launches a new series with a wraparound chromium cover.

IMAGE COMICS

• CARTOON BOOKS

This May sees the return of *Bone Volume One: Out from Boneville*, the trade paperback collecting the first six issues of the series. This edition, retailing for $12.95, will feature the same look as the hardcover. Don't worry about missing a single issue of "Bone," cause you can once again start subscribing. Anyone interested in a yearly subscription (six issues) should send $18 (check or money order) along with their name and address to: Cartoon Books, P.O. Box 16973, Columbus, OH 43216.

• TOP COW PRODUCTIONS

Cyberforce hits the quarter-century mark with a double-sided special issue featuring a "silver rainbow holograph foil" wraparound cover in June and including an original Mort Silvestri pin-up. *Cyberforce #25* will also offer a preview of the upcoming Silvestri project, *The Darkness*, which will be written by Garth Ennis. Top Cow will also release several sets of ashcans in June. Among the ashcans available in these sets are *Cyberforce #0: Special San Diego Con 1993 Edition*, deluxe editions of *Cyberforce #2*, #3 and #4, as well as *Codename: Stryke force #1* and *Ripclaw #1: Special Preview* (both by Brandon Peterson). Top it off with the Pittsburgh Preview of the *Ballistic Studios Swimsuit Special*.

KITCHEN SINK PRESS

Dung Boys #1, shipping in April, is a three-issue monthly series by Robb Conaway in a Tank Girl style. Look for *The Crow: Director's Cut* this April, featuring 12 new pages from James O'Barr that didn't make it to print in the first mini-series. This edition will become the regular printing of the Crow mini-series, and it retails for $17.95. May sees some exciting releases: The first issue of Jay Stephens' bimonthly *Atomic City Tales* hits the shelves, as does issue #10 (the final issue, *finally*) of Dave McKean's *Cages*. Also, look for the three-issue *The Crow: Flesh & Blood #1*. It stars a pregnant woman who's killed in a bomb blast, and later returns to confront her killers, as well as her lover, who was ready to leave her. Finally, just in time for the August 9 release of "The Crow: City of Angels," comes the full-color adaptation of the film.

continued on page 20

MARC SILVESTRI'S

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NEWS BITES

Generation Link

Chris Bachalo is returning to his penciling duties on ***Generation X*** #17 in May with a special cameo creator. Writer **Scott Lobdell**'s original script had special framing sequences, but Bachalo drew in **Stan Lee** as the presenter for each. With that, editor **Bob Harras** asked Stan the Man to script his own presentation dialogue. "It's something we don't often get to do," said Harras. "But it was a lot of fun. And no matter how many times I talk to Stan, I always get off the phone marveling, 'I just talked to Stan Lee!' " ■ *JBL*

Waid Will Not Follow Captain America to Liefeld's Studio

Mark Waid has announced that he will relinquish the writing reins on ***Captain America*** when that title moves into the artistic hands of **Rob Liefeld** as part of **Marvel**'s "Unfinished Business" project.

Waid said he wished Liefeld well with the shield-slinger and thanked artist **Ron Garney** for the blood, sweat and tears he had put into the book. According to Waid, sales on *Captain America* had more than doubled since the two of them took over, which made him regret all the more his departure. Summing up, he said, "I'm having the time of my life doing *Captain America*. Leaving it was a very difficult decision to make." ■ *PDO*

Elfquest Returns to #1

As reported in *Wizard* #56, **WaRP Graphics** is revamping its entire publishing schedule beginning in May. The first element of that new plan is ***Elfquest* #1**, the first in a new ongoing anthology series featuring the adventures of the elves on the World of Two Moons. The first issue features "Wild Hunt" by Joellyn Auklandus and Steve Blevins; "Fire-Eye" by Bern Harkins and Delfin Barral; and "Wave Dancers" by Kathryn Bollinger and Richard Pini.

The 64-page black-and-white title will retail for $4.95. ■ *POD*

"Joker's Revenge" Planned for Fiesta Texas

Batman's got his own amusement park ride; now the **Joker** will have one too.

Six Flags, the theme park subsidiary of **Time Warner** (and hence sister company to DC Comics), has taken over the Fiesta Texas park in San Antonio. The first addition to the park will be "The Joker's Revenge," a purple roller coaster that will run backwards and turn its riders upside down. Sounds like it's right up the Clown Prince of Crime's alley. No date was announced for the coaster's first run. ■ *POD*

DC's *Metropolis SCU* Wins Gay Award

Honored alongside such films as "Boys on the Side" and "To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar," **DC Comics**' mini-series ***Metropolis SCU*** was recognized for its portrayal of Inspector Maggie Sawyer by the **Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation** at its Media Awards ceremonies in New York City in March. GLAAD has handed out nods since 1989 to recognize outstanding media coverage of gays and lesbians. ■ *POD*

BYTE THIS!

John Byrne, currently the writer/artist on ***Wonder Woman*** and about to take over ***New Gods***, will be on "Wizard World" May 23 @ 8:00-8:45 p.m. (EST). He'll speak about his long career and his work on *Uncanny X-Men, Fantastic Four, Superman, Wonder Woman* and other books.

To hook up to "Wizard World" on America Online, call 800-754-4400. They'll send you free software and 10 hours free online. Keyword: Wizard. ■ *Buddy Scalera*

company updates

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LIGHTNING COMICS

In June, Lightning releases another creator-owned series: *Sinja*, which mixes Ninjitsu and magic and displays the new style of writer/artist John Cleary (Image's *Deadly Duo*).

LONDON NIGHT STUDIOS

London Night has taken over Bishop Press. In April, it will reprint the *Sade/Razor Special* that Bishop originally released in 1995, and in June, it officially starts publishing the imprint, with *Rose 'N' Gunn* #1 and *Sade* #1. The Razor/Warrior Nun Areola crossover issue shipping in May directly ties into the current *Razor: Torture* series.

MARVEL COMICS

Rick Jones' granddaughter from *Hulk: Future Imperfect* pops up in *Incredible Hulk* #443, shipping in May. May is "Jump On" month for the Spider-Man titles, as all books will feature self-contained stories. The acclaimed *Marvels* mini-series is being reprinted biweekly throughout May and June at a lower price of $2.95 (it was originally $3.95 each issue).

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT

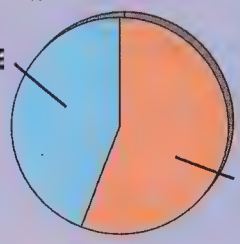
Terri S. Wood's *Wandering Star* joins the Sirius family this spring. Formerly a self-publisher, Wood cited business mismanagement and creative freedom in making the decision. In April comes *Poison Elves* #12, as Lusiphur must face off against The Purple Marauder Squad.

TOPPS COMICS

May's *The X-Files* #0 is the first of an all-new series adapting episodes of the TV show. The zero issue adapts the pilot episode, with subsequent issues going in chronological order. Each issue will be adapted by Roy Thomas and John Van Fleet. In May, the four-issue adaptation of the movie "Dragonheart" begins. Art is by Ron Lim with script by David Anthony Kraft.

Question of the Month

In time for **Toy Fair**, *Wizard* wanted some fan opinions on an action figure's **playability** and **appearance**. McFarlane Toys' Spawn figures look incredible, but posing is limited to them. On the other hand, Toy Biz's action figures are very poseable, but may not be as striking. We used our "Wizard World" forum on America Online to ask which is more important: an action figure's playability or appearance?



We also asked the following funky toy questions:

- Do you prefer plastic (**47%**) or cloth capes (**53%**)?
- Do you prefer an action feature at the expense of poseability? **88%** said no, while **12%** enjoy a limiting action feature.
- What size figures do you prefer: large like McFarlane's toys (**46%**), medium like Toy Biz's (**36%**) or small like the new Star Wars figures (**18%**)?
- Do you buy toys to play with (**41%**) or to put on the shelf (**59%**)?

Overall, the majority of people would like to see a good mix of playability along with a great appearance.

As for the capes, proponents of plastic capes said plastic capes look much better than cloth. But, as one fan pointed out, "When Superman flies, his cape flutters. Plastic doesn't flutter."

And while more fans may simply be using their figures as ornaments, one fan promotes playing with figures. "My KnightQuest Batman figure just sits and collects dust. And no matter how good looking a dust collector is, it's still a dust collector." ■ *John B. Lacey*

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GARFIELD GAMES

RAISING KANE

Paul Grist's *Kane* takes the crime noir genre to a new level with a humorous twist

By Craig Shutt

THIS AIN'T NO *SIN CITY*.

Sure, there's a hard-boiled hero. There's also a ruthless mob boss.

But you can bet that creator Frank Miller never featured a supporting character in a bunny suit. And that's what sets Paul Grist's self-published black-and-white *Kane* apart from the various other gritty, crime noir comics out there.

"Frank Miller's *Sin City* is the first thing people think of as an influence when they see *Kane*," admits Grist. "But once they read it, I think they realize it's a very different kind of comic. It's a crime comic and a detective story, but it's also meant to be a humor book—but not all the time. I have to be careful necessarily saying that, because it's not always funny."

In fact, the book's title alludes to the Biblical story of Cain and Abel. Rather than a tale of brother slaying brother, this story tells of a British police detective named Detective Kane who shoots his popular, but crooked, partner. Issue #1 begins with Kane (who, curiously, is never referred to by his first name) returning from a six-month suspension to the New Eden police force, where he is surrounded by peers who at best distrust him and at worst hate him. His only respite comes from his new young partner, Kate Felix, who provides loyal support whether Kane wants it or not.

On the other side of this grim scenario are characters such as Mr. Floppsie Whoppsie, a street entertainer dressed in a bunny suit. Introduced in issue #2, he also played a key role in issue #5, which to date has been the readers' favorite issue, Grist says. Done in pantomime, it followed several interweaving chases that ultimately came together. "Readers really liked that [dialogueless] story," he notes wryly. "I'm not sure how that reflects on my writing."

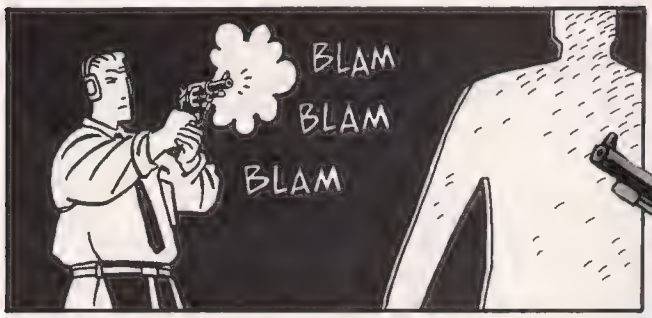
He stresses that every issue of the bimonthly series does tell its own story. "Each has a beginning and an end, but it also has a few longer plot threads running through it," he explains. "That way, readers can appreciate any issue they pick up, but hopefully as they read more, they'll see a bigger picture and it becomes more effective."

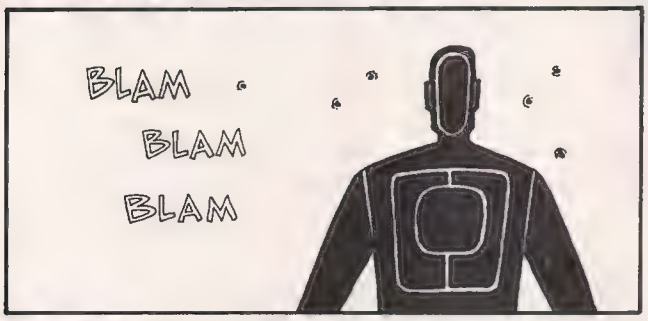
THE 35-YEAR-OLD GRIST HONED HIS ABILITY to tell complete stories through work for British publishers. A native of Sheffield, England (where he publishes *Kane*), Grist started out in the mid-1980s publishing mini-comics through England's small press network. They included *Short Stories* and another one-shot, both spotlighting Burglar Bill, a character who has followed Grist all his life. (A Bill story appeared as a back-up in *Kane* #4.)

"Policemen and comics have been my big obsessions all through life," he says. "When I was growing up, I was the one who always had the little plastic truncheons and fingerprint kits. I thought those were terrific. I knew that I was either going to become a policeman or a comics artist, so I compromised and decided to do comics about policemen."

Grist's ups and downs with Burglar Bill—he had a few strips published, as well as a planned six-part series that was canceled by Trident after only one issue, and another series by Tundra UK that never saw print—soured him on working

Below: Kane and partner Dennis Harvey before the shooting
Right: Kane after the incident





with publishers. "Publishers are Crocodiles," he wrote in his editorial in *Kane* #4 to explain why *Kane* is self-published by his Dancing Elephant Press. "Don't put anything into their mouths that you can't afford to live without." Today, he says, "I don't really have anything against publishers, some of them are very nice. It's just that you don't realize which ones aren't nice until you're in too deep with them." In fact, he drew 1994's *Grendel Tales: Devil in Our Midst* for Dark Horse Comics after finishing *Kane* #1 when writer Steven Seagle offered it to him.

But Grist wanted to self-publish his more personal work, and decided that he needed characters with less history than Burglar Bill. "I wanted to do something different but not something completely different," Grist explains. "So I decided to switch sides. Doing tales about policemen offered a similar environment without covering the same ground as my Burglar Bill stories."

GRIST'S STARK STYLE SUITS THE WORLD OF *Kane*, which ultimately revolves around the shooting of Kane's partner. "That's the key event that triggers an awful lot of other things," he says.

Through flashbacks, readers know the killing was done in self-defense, and Kane was cleared of charges during his suspension. His fellow officers aren't so sure, but Kane doesn't care. His maverick personality shows through at times, such as when he confronts a hostage taker in #1 (and another in #10) and tries to talk down a suicidal, has-been actor dressed as a superhero in #8. But the other characters take center stage at least as often.

"Everyone says their favorite issue was #5, which doesn't even feature Kane," Grist points out. "So obviously, I'll be getting rid of him. Well, maybe not," he laughs. "But I do intend to focus on other characters so readers will have insight into what's made them as they are." In fact, three of the next four issues will highlight supporting

"It's a crime comic and a detective story, but it's also meant to be a humor book... but it's not always funny."
—Paul Grist

Oscar Darke—once a troubled child of the streets, now the kingpin who controls them

characters. (For details, see the sidebar.)

And sooner or later, "Most everybody who already has appeared will be coming back." That includes the bag lady from issue #3, Mr. Floppsie Whoppsie's two-panel taxi driver from #5, and the rat catcher from #6.

Grist hasn't yet introduced some characters who will play key roles, he reveals. One of those is the partner to Detective Jimmy Lovett, Kane's biggest enemy on the force. "I've learned there are certain characters who are missing from the series," he explains. "It wasn't until I was a few issues in that I realized Lovett should have a partner. That will spin off a whole new storyline important to events." He's also considering a love interest for Kane, but hasn't made up his mind.

BUT DON'T ASK WHEN ANY OF THAT MAY BE coming, because Grist doesn't really know. "I know the back story and its effect on each character," he assures. "But *when* specific things will happen is hard to say. I tend to improvise as I go along. That allows me to build present-day storylines around the background and bring out little echoes of what's happened previously."

The one plotline he knows for sure is the resolution to the killing of Kane's partner. "That is definitely going somewhere," he promises. "That's the one part I've got worked out. I'll explain the shooting and why it happened and how it will be resolved."

That resolution involves Oscar Darke, the organized crime boss who was paying off Kane's partner.

"There's a definite story I'm working through with Oscar, and then others will follow that," he explains. "But it will take me a while to get there. I don't see this as a 12-issue mini-series that has to wrap up in a certain time. That gives me the freedom to go off on tangents."

Sometimes, he admits, that freedom causes problems. "This last issue [#11] was the worst I've ever done in terms of how smoothly it's gone," he says. "I started out with an idea and worked on it for two weeks, and then I saw it wasn't going to work. So I tried another approach, and it wasn't quite working either. But by then, I was saying [panicked], 'Oh, no! I've got to make this work! I can't start over yet again!' So it's taken a few weeks longer than it should have." Adding to those woes was an unexpected one-week delay for—ironies of ironies—jury duty. "Expect to see some courtroom scenes in upcoming issues," he laughs.

He also hopes to publish a *Burglar Bill* special this summer. But rest assured that Grist plans to stay focused. "I want to get *Kane* into a stronger position before I go off to try something else," he says. "I don't know how long I'll be able to do this, but I have lots of story ideas. I want to see how long I can run with this and then go from there." W

Craig Shutt, who wrote about Amalgam Comics last issue, always stays inside the lines when he colors in his black-and-white comics.

WALKING KANE

Here's what to expect in the future from Paul Grist and *Kane*:

• *Kane* #11, in stores now, features the first of several stories to focus on *Kane*'s supporting cast. It highlights Detective Jimmy Lovett, who hates Kane but winds up being paired with him on a case. "I'm working toward a resolution of sorts between them, but it will take a while to get there," Grist says.

• *Kane* #12, due out in April, returns to our main conflict as Kane visits mob boss Oscar Darke, who is in the hospital after the failed assassination on him in #9. "It's the big confrontation between them." In #13, the focus strays to Officers Miguel Perez and Steve Donahue as they're on patrol in their police car. And #14 will feature Kane's partner, Kate Felix, "but a somewhat different version than you're used to," Grist says cagily. (In fact, he lets slip later, it shows her at age five.)

• A trade paperback of the first four issues of *Kane* arrived in March, and a second one featuring #5-#8 will be out in October. The next four-issue collection will follow in early 1997, with reprintings of single issues in-between. "I probably should have started putting out the paperbacks quicker," he concedes. After the third one, six issues will be collected in each. Grist would have collected the earlier ones in sixes too, he explains, but he wanted to keep issues #5 through #7 together since threads interweave.

• The *Burglar Bill Summer Fun Special*, planned for June, will collect previously published pieces from *Short Stories* and Harrier's anthology *Gag!* as well as a new tale prepared but never published. It features the first true appearance of Mr. Floppsie Whoppsie, who was planned as a Burglar Bill character. Depending on response to that issue, a six-issue *Burglar Bill* series could appear in 1997. "I've got five issues done, most of which have never appeared," he laments. "It would be a shame to let it go to waste." ■ *CS*

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Wizard casts the Simpsons movie!

Casting call 15

Let's face facts: "The Simpsons" has been on prime-time TV longer than any other cartoon series (for over six years, beating out "The Flintstones," which was on for exactly six). Since that fateful January of 1990, it seems the characters have each taken a life unto themselves. With that in mind, casting a live-action Simpsons flick at first seemed kinda daunting. But, heck, once we started, it became easy! Here's what we came up with...

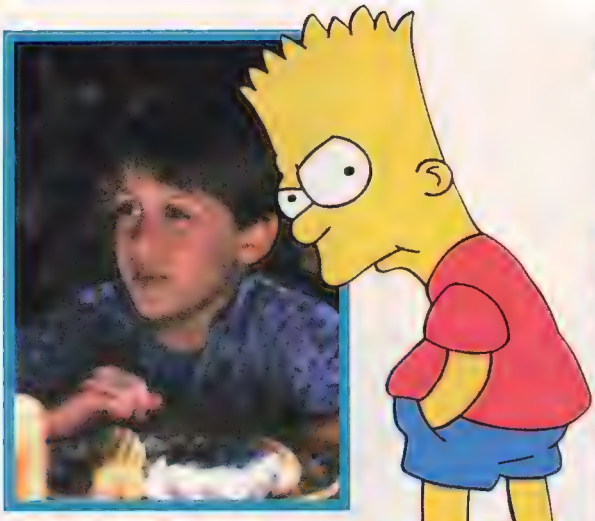
HOMER SIMPSON

Tom Arnold ("True Lies") would play our beer-chugging head of the Simpson clan.

MARGE SIMPSON

Even though she does Marge's voice on the show, Julie Kavner ("I'll Do Anything") is a shoo-in. Heck, she's got the voice and everything!

By a bunch of *Wizard* staffers



BART SIMPSON

Playing the Prince of Mischief is Kieran Culkin, best known for his roles in "Nowhere to Run" and both "Father of the Bride" films.

LISA SIMPSON

Lacey Chabert would be perfect as the sax-playin' do-gooder, especially since she's shown her violin prowess on "Party of Five."

PATTY & SELMA

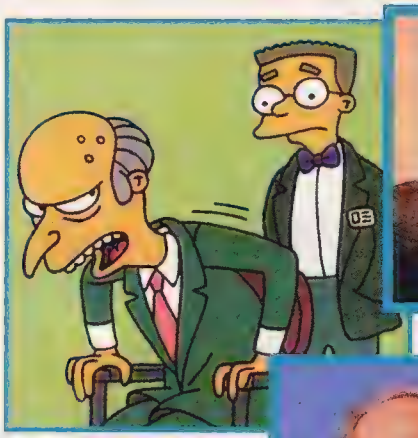
This would be a dual role for Florence Stanley ("My Two Dads"), who would do these whiny twins annoying justice.

MAGGIE

All we need for Maggie is a cute kid who has to have Liz Taylor's voice. (Okay, okay—we'll improvise with the kid from "Baby Boom.")

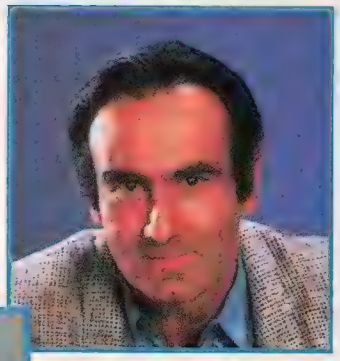
ABE SIMPSON

Playing Homer's dad would be veteran actor Abe Vigoda ("Barney Miller"). Heck, he's already been the model for senility in "Look Who's Talking."



SMITHERS

Al Franken ("Saturday Night Live") has the look to be Mr. Burns' gay assistant.



MR. BURNS

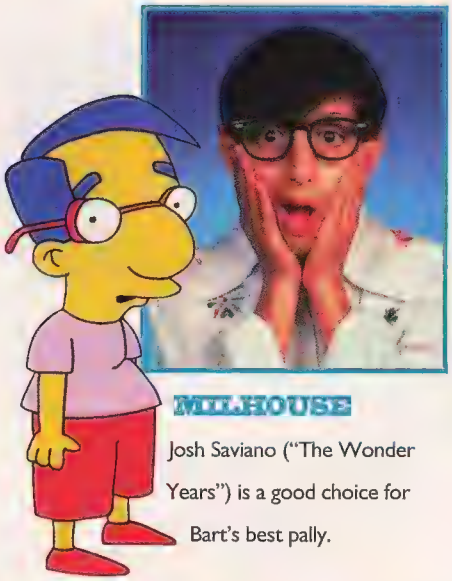
That lurch. That evil grin. Only Conrad Bain ("Diff'rent Strokes") can bring Burns to life.

MOE

Dan Hedaya ("Clueless") would be great as everyone's favorite bartender.

KRUSTY THE CLOWN

We want an inept clown for good ol' Krusty. Bobcat Goldthwait already did this shtick with "Shakes The Clown," so he can do it again right here.



MILHOUSE

Josh Saviano ("The Wonder Years") is a good choice for Bart's best pally.

APU

Fisher Stevens did a perfect Apu-like character in "Short Circuit" and he wasn't even trying. So why not have him do the real deal here?

BARNEY

Homer's bar bud fits Chris Farley ("Black Sheep") to a sloshed T.

Like "The Brady Bunch," "The Addams Family" or any other pop culture TV show, we guess we'll have to wait around 20 years for a movie to be made with those wacky Simpsons. And if it's given the proper treatment like the above two TV-to-movie classics, we'll gladly wait. **W**

In between their binges at White Castle, the Wizard *staff can always sit back and enjoy a good Dick Butkus flick.*

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SEVEN THUNDERS
UTTERED THEIR VOICES."
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FIRST LOOK

STARDUST

NEIL GAIMAN AND CHARLES VESS TELL THEIR OWN FAERIE TALE IN A NEW VERTIGO SERIES

NEIL GAIMAN AND CHARLES VESS HAD JUST WON THE 1991 WORLD FANTASY AWARD FOR BEST SHORT STORY AT THE ANNUAL CONVENTION IN TUCSON WHEN THE WRITER CAME OVER TO THE ARTIST AT A CHAMPAGNE RECEPTION AND DRAGGED HIM OUTSIDE INTO THE CRISP OCTOBER NIGHT.

"Neil said, 'I've got the story for our book,' " Vess recalls. "We had been talking about getting together on a story of our own set in the world of Faerie ever since collaborating on the third issue of *The Books of Magic* mini-series. He then proceeded to spin the whole thing out for me and it was wonderful."

The result is *Stardust*, a story about a young man named Tristan, half-human/half-Faerie and gifted with the ability to find anything that is lost. When he promises the woman he is slated to marry that he will claim for her a falling star that has landed on the Faerie side of the wall beside the village in which they live, he sets out on a quest that quickly turns magical. Rather than being a mere lump of stone, Gaiman says this star has turned into "an incredibly ill-tempered, disagreeable young lady with a broken leg." But there are others seeking the same prize as Tristan, as he and his newfound celestial companion must flee across the Faerie realm.

Stardust will be published by Vertigo as a four-issue mini-series and then, Vess says, "packaged as a lovely coffee table book which will have additional material beyond that in the mini-series. That is part of our contract and that is how we first envisioned the whole thing. *Stardust* lends itself to such treatment because it is not a traditional comic book. There will be prose and text on every page, but neither word balloons nor panels. It is really a profusely illustrated novel."

A somewhat romantic attempt on Gaiman's part to handwrite the script ran asunder "because I couldn't read it," Vess confesses, laughing. "So now Neil is dictating the story on tape. I'll use that to do preliminary sketches of characters and events, and then Neil will do a final draft and I'll design the pages and paint the illustrations.

"This is all still very open-ended, a back and forth ongoing process in which we exchange ideas and concepts," Vess says. "But when we're finished, we expect to have a book that belongs on every coffee table in America." W

Jack Curtin, who gave us a glimpse of The Dreaming *in* Wizard *#55, wants to live happily ever after.*

BY JACK CURTIN

VITAL STATS

WHO?
A half-human/half-Faerie young man named Tristan and an ill-tempered young woman on the run in a world of magic.

WHAT?
A four-issue, Prestige Format mini-series from Neil Gaiman and Charles Vess, a "profusely illustrated novel" destined to be a coffee table book.

DEBUT?
Late '96/early '97

WHAT'S THE DEAL?
The creative team that won a World Fantasy Award in 1991 for *The Sandman #19* (and recently wrapped up the acclaimed series in *The Sandman #75*) get to strut their stuff on a creator-owned project.

Top: Gaiman (left) and Vess
Above: A scene from the duo's *Books of Magic* #3

Brave New World

Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld reinvent the Marvel Universe as they unleash plans for their Marvel books

by Marc Shapiro

The creators of what's being called "Unfinished Business" are finally getting down to business. It's put-up or shut-up time as the principal warriors in the Marvel Comics trenches, Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld, are beginning to feel the heat.

"We've had nine months to prepare for this," says Lee who will be piloting the fortunes of *Iron Man* and *Fantastic Four*. "Now we have to sit down and deliver the goods."

"I almost see this as the last hurrah," reports Liefeld who hopes to bring *Captain America* and *The Avengers* back to life. "If we can't launch these characters and make them work, then we're going to have an industry full of vigilantes and half-naked women."

Liefeld offers that, as far as storylines go, Cap and the Avengers "already have story bibles that are set in stone." Lee, for his part, says, "I have far less details about *Iron Man* and *Fantastic Four* in the last four issues than I do in the first four."

Integral to the relaunch of the four classic Marvel groups is this summer's "Onslaught" storyline. Liefeld hints that "'Onslaught' basically wipes out half the Marvel Universe and sets the stage for this." Lee adds, "I know in a general sense that 'Onslaught' sets up what we're doing now. But I don't know the specific details about what happens other than that 'Onslaught' is X-Men related."

From the way both creators talk about their plans, it sounds as if "Onslaught" is a vehicle in which Marvel is relaunching its entire universe from square one. But Marvel Editor-in-Chief Bob Harras explains, "Jim and Rob's launch in September will definitely be a part of 'Onslaught' because it explains how this event will occur."

But Harras wants to quell the comparisons with DC Comics' start-over-from-ground-zero *Crisis on Infinite Earths* maxi-series from 10 years ago. "I am very adamant that these are still the same characters readers have come to know," Harras says. "The Fantastic Four will still be the same characters you first met in 1961 but something dramatic is going to happen to make this all...organic. In other words, we're not saying at any point that all those other issues you read never happened. And 'Onslaught' will explain a lot of this. There is a reason for all this."

Captain America

Liefeld addresses the *Captain America* storyline in enticing, cryptic info bites. "Captain America is King Arthur, his shield is Excalibur and America is Camelot. I don't want to fit all the pieces together but there's a historical map to all this."

Liefeld does concede a bit, posting a storyline based on the premise that Captain America disappeared shortly after the end of World War II.

"Where he's been and how we introduce him to the modern day is where we pick up the story. I can tell you this much, he is not found by Eskimos and he is not tossed into the ocean by Sub-Mariner. He comes back in a present day America that is mired in race wars, hatred and is committing terrorist attacks against itself. There's not a lot of hope left. Within that framework there's an organization called The Red Skull that is feeding on the hatred and fear of youth and building a new Nazi party."

He also says that Captain America will be joined by "a new Falcon" around issue #4.

Liefeld reveals that this relaunch of the classic character "will have no shoulder pads or heavy artillery. Basically he has his shield and his agenda."

The Avengers

The creator is less specific when it comes to Earth's Mightiest Heroes. He does say that the Avengers storyline will be set up as a result of the events in the first two issues of *Captain America* and will feature Thor and Loki in its first issue. He also promises that Nick Fury and S.H.I.E.L.D. will play an important role in all four relaunch books. And Iron Man and the Hulk will come into the fold by mid-run.

"The main focus in *The Avengers*," says Liefeld, "will be on the Scarlet Witch, who has been trained as a S.H.I.E.L.D. agent and who has uncanny abilities and mutant powers, and an eager, but not quite as sinister, Vision. We will also have Hawkeye, Swordsman and Hellcat who are much different characters than we've seen them before."

Iron Man

Lee picks up the story hint parade with his new take on Iron Man. "I want to get to the core of this character which is that Tony Stark is the only guy who can be Iron Man. I felt the whole concept of Iron Man had gotten diluted because it just became a suit that anyone could wear. With this story we make the suit an integral part of Tony Stark's existence, which it was originally.

Photo by Paul Schiraldi

"This story will also tie in Iron Man's origin with another Marvel character's origin. I've always felt that Iron Man did not have a yin for his yang. He didn't have his version of Dr. Doom. We've set up a situation where Iron Man is feeling responsible for creating his arch nemesis."

Fantastic Four

Lee claims that what he describes as "a retro but definitely post-modern take" on the Fantastic Four began with a side trip to past glories. "I read a lot of the Stan Lee and Jack Kirby stuff from around issue #40, totally immersed myself in that period and basically came up with an updated Fantastic Four. There's a lot of elements to FF that were never explored before that we will look at. Sue Storm and Reed Richards will not be married, so there will be some romantic tension. Johnny Storm is going to be a contemporary young adult and will suffer from what I see most 20-year-olds suffering from today.

"The first issue of *Fantastic Four* is loosely based on the first issue of *FF* from 1961," he continues, "but because I know what's going to happen in issues #4, #8 and #12, I can lay a lot of subplots down. I'm not going to makes these characters completely unrecognizable and, for the most part, the stories are not going to feel that dissimilar to what's happened before."

Answering the Critics

Both Lee and Liefeld are aware of the industry response to "Unfinished Business" and, in particular, the negative response from many, including a number of Image people.

"I expected every reaction we've gotten," says Liefeld. "But I don't know why people are so preoccupied with it. I don't understand their anger. I can understand the resentment of the people who are no longer working on these books but, with the other people, I'm not sure why this has everybody's shorts twisted up in a bundle. I think a lot of this reeks of jealousy."

Lee, likewise, is not surprised at the uproar. "In a general sense, it was expected. Rob and I knew there would be controversy and a huge flurry of attention."

Liefeld returns to book basics. He says that each of the four titles will have separate storylines but that "a major upheaval in the Marvel Universe at mid-run will bring all four books together."

Lee's Fantasic Four

"There will be characters who will act as go-betweens," he elaborates, "who will know there is something familiar about the characters in the four books. There will be a new reality that will ultimately bring them all together."

As if it were an afterthought, Liefeld concludes this mystery dance by dropping a bombshell.

"Oh, by the way. Galactus is coming." W

Marc Shapiro, who told you all about Spider-Man: Legacy of Evil *last month, was found by Eskimos and was tossed into the ocean by The Sub-Mariner.*

At left: Liefeld's Hulk
Above backround: Lee's Silver Surfer and Galactus

Personal Best
The Best of Lee & Liefeld

For of you who are not overly familiar with Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld and are chomping at the bit for these Marvel "Unfinished Business" stories, here's a quick peek at some of the more noteworthy comics the two have done in the past.

Jim Lee

• *Punisher War Journal* #1 & #2
An old acquaintance of the Punisher returns to enact revenge, and Punisher gets caught in the middle of it.

• *Punisher War Journal* #6 & #7
The Punisher and Wolverine lock horns in a brutal (yet brief) battle that features the Punisher not doing too badly.

• *Uncanny X-Men* #268
Awesome flashback of Wolverine and Cap teaming up in World War II. Great stuff with one of the funniest captions in comics.

• *Uncanny X-Men* #275-#277
Professor X goes mad in outer space while only the X-Men can stop the madness. And Wolverine stops it... in a kinda permanent way.

• *X-Men* (current series) #1-#3
The explosive debut of the X-Men's Blue and Gold teams, as they must fight Magneto, the Acolytes and each other.

Rob Liefeld

• *Hawk & Dove* (mini-series) #1-#5
Hawk meets the new Dove as they take on their evil counterpart Kestrel. So cool, it spawned a monthly H&D series.

• *New Mutants* #98-#100
Arguably the most entertaining issues of *New Mutants* ever! The end of the team and the groundwork for the launch of *X-Force*.

• *X-Force* #1-#2
The introduction of the mutant strike force X-Force has the team face off against the deadly Mutant Liberation Force! Toss in Deadpool and you've got a party!

• *What if...?* #7
With a story by fellow Imager Jim Valentino, Wolverine joins S.H.I.E.L.D. instead of the X-Men and the &#@! hits the fan.

• *Team Youngblood* #9
Liefeld's impressive return to comics after a year-long sabbatical. Attention to detail and characterization makes this one a winner.

• *Youngblood* #6
Liefeld's follow-up to *Team Youngblood* #9, it continues to endure as some of Liefeld's finest Image work.

■ *Victor Tayback*

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THY KINGDOM

WIZARD TAKES AN EXCLUSIVE PEEK INTO ALEX ROSS' KINGDOM COME SKETCHBOOK FOR A LOOK AT THE FUTURE OF THE DC UNIVERSE

KINGDOM COME, FINALLY, IS COMING.

The long-awaited new project by acclaimed *Marvels* painter Alex Ross will burst onto the stands in May. Written by Mark Waid, the four-part, 48-page monthly Elseworlds series presents the DC Universe 20 years in the future, when several heroes have aged and others have passed the mantle along, some to their descendants. A cataclysmic event forces every hero to choose sides and go to war.

"I think we've done a fair job of visually representing just about everybody who has had any nominal importance in DC's history," says Ross. His depictions of heroes return some to their roots, while others grow from current versions. "I didn't demand that every character be dramatically different, but I did demand that it be fun for the reader. The one constant was that I tried to respect what the original creators had in mind, by letting the roots show through."

The best part, he adds, is that "all the designs are based on what I wanted to do, with no outside input. This is all pure and undiluted, as far as my vision of how it should look. That's very comforting and satisfying."

On the following pages are initial sketches for some of the book's key characters. The new names shown are Ross's own codenames and won't appear in the book, he notes. "I got shot down on most of them."

BY CRAIG SHUTT

SUPERMAN

COMES

WONDER WOMAN

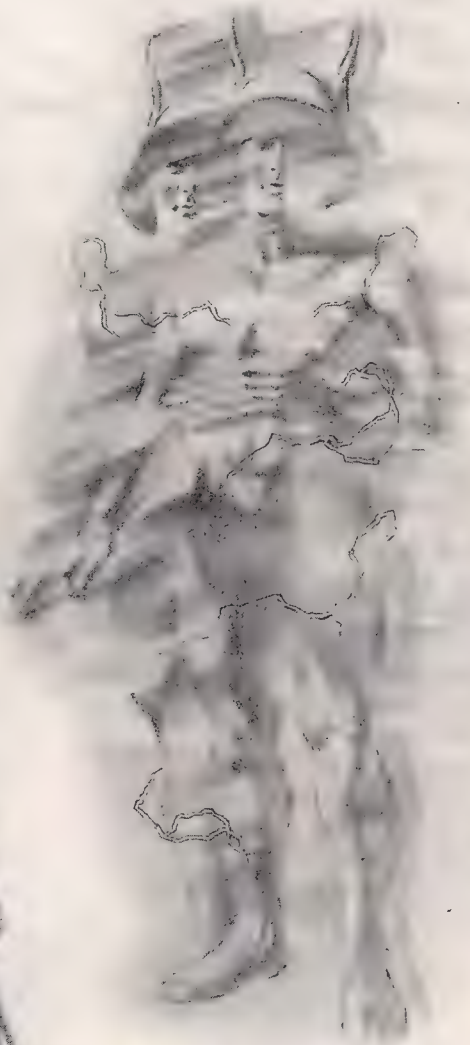
Created from clay and animated by the gods, Wonder Woman hasn't aged, Ross explains. She features a somewhat bulkier upper body than most artists draw. "I wanted to give her a realistic sense of muscle tone for a woman as strong as she is, but she won't be as overdone as Power Woman." Her chest emblem will be larger too, something that always has bugged Ross. She also sports a loincloth, rather than trunks. "John Byrne is a sissy for not drawing all the stars," Ross laughs. "I looked at it as a challenge. If they're hard to draw, then so much the better, because it makes me work harder." The loincloth "hearkens back to her skirt, which never looked that great, while giving it a sexier feel by opening up the sides."

SUPERMAN

"Superman has held together pretty well, but you can see the age in his face when you get close," Ross says. "He's got a weathered Doc Savage look to him." The chest emblem represents the biggest change, picking up the red and black styling from the 1940s Max Fleischer cartoons. "Superman's emblem has changed over time, and I wanted to give a sense that it's still transforming." Even the blue and red colors are in darker tones than the standard look, he notes. "It's dramatically different but still true to his roots. I gave him a sense of grandeur, and honestly, I've had no more fun drawing anyone's costume than I've had with Superman's."

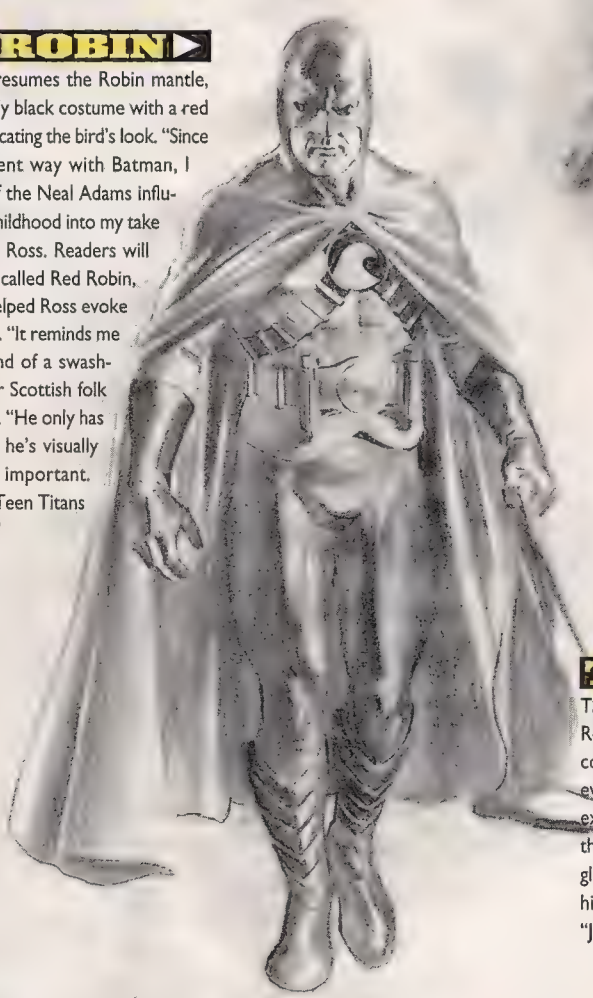
◀REV. NORMAN McCAY

The Spectre co-opts this character to help him interpret the story's events from a human perspective. All of the action is seen from his viewpoint, as *Marvels* was seen through Phil Sheldon's eyes. Ross based the character's look on his own father. "The whole point of this project was to make my dad a key character in the DC Universe," he laughs. "Knowing the person behind this character added real depth to the project for me. My dad is a very interesting, charismatic person, like an older Jimmy Stewart figure. He represents to me an ideal of the average man from the '30s or '40s who doesn't seem to exist anymore. He's a Mister Rogers type, with the sweater and everything, although after posing in it for all the photos I took, he's probably sick of it."



RED ROBIN▶

Dick Grayson resumes the Robin mantle, creating a mostly black costume with a red chest plate, replicating the bird's look. "Since I went a different way with Batman, I brought a lot of the Neal Adams influence from my childhood into my take on Robin," says Ross. Readers will never hear him called Red Robin, but the name helped Ross evoke the proper look. "It reminds me of Rob Roy, kind of a swashbuckling Irish or Scottish folk hero," he notes. "He only has a few lines, but he's visually prominent and important. All the original Teen Titans are prominent."



THE FLASH▲

This Flash-derived character evokes a nearly godlike image, but Ross won't say which existing Flash he represents. His look comes from his solution to the dilemma of wanting to be everywhere at once. "He's never quite still," Ross claims. "He exists as a motion blur. You can assume he's in more places than the one you see him in." He'll be represented by a red glow over his entire body and static electricity curling around him, with no costume detail apparent—and toes showing. "Just as I drew a man who was fire in *Marvels* [the Human

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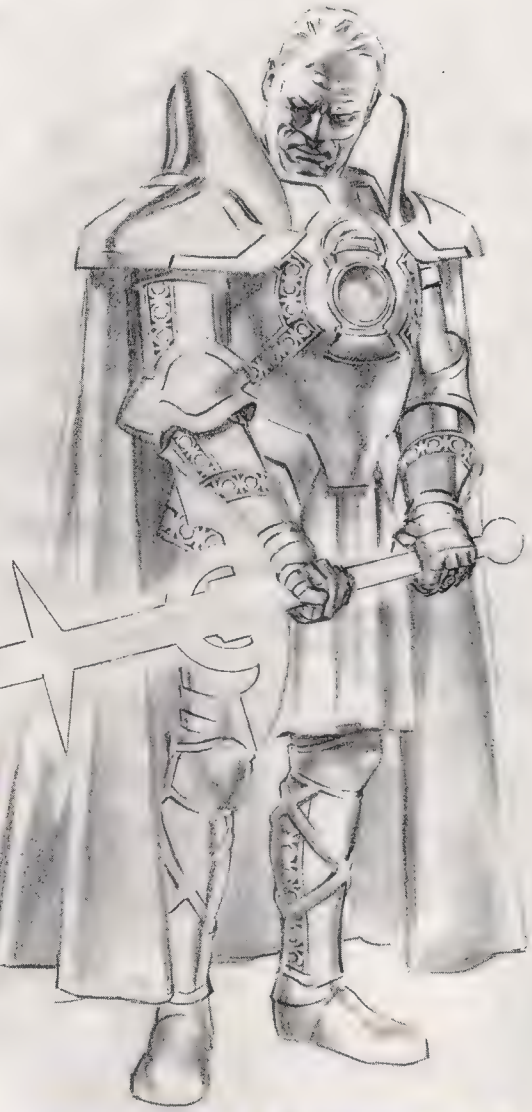
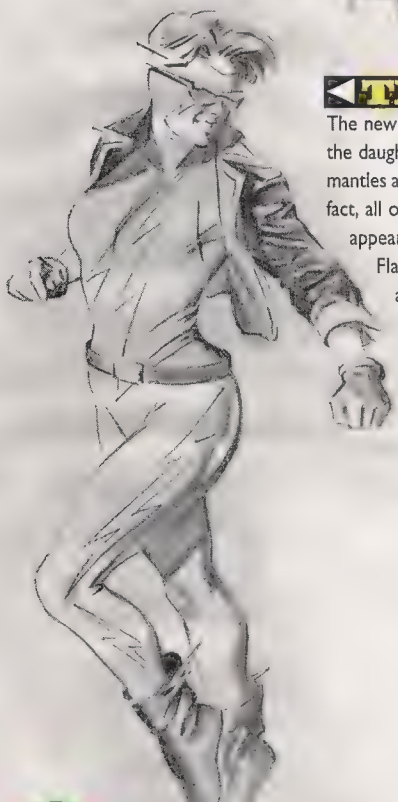
HAWKMAN

This character extrapolates from the most-current incarnation, in which a hawk-god plays a key role in giving the hero his powers. "I took the body of the hawk-god and put him into our plane of existence, with the soul of one of the Hawkmen we know," he says. The Egyptian trappings pay homage to the Golden Age hero, as does the mask, which Ross based on the version drawn by Jerry Ordway in the 1980s series *All-Star Squadron*. "When I sat down to create this character, I drew up the version I loved the most. He's faithful to both the most recent look and the oldest."





THE FLASH II

The new Flash, like the new Green Lantern, is the daughter of a previous incarnation. "Those mantles are always passed on," Ross explains. In fact, all of the original Titans will have children appearing. His version of the young female Flash was designed before Jesse Quick adopted a somewhat similar look in the *Flash* comic, he notes. Without admitting who she's related to, he says cagily, "She seems to have a strong connection to Wally West's Kid Flash look."

GREEN LANTERN

Ross won't reveal which Lantern is under the mask, but readers will ultimately figure it out, he says. (He promises it isn't Guy Gardner.) The look combines primarily the Golden Age version and Hal Jordan's Parallax style. "My goal was to create a design that wouldn't offend Martin Nodell [creator of the Golden Age GL]. There's a certain homage paid there, with his grandeur and general appearance." (More of Hal Jordan's style will be seen in the new Green Lantern.) This Green Lantern's personality was inspired by writer James Robinson's take in his mini-series, *The Golden Age*, where GL was an all-powerful hero who tried not to interfere in routine matters.

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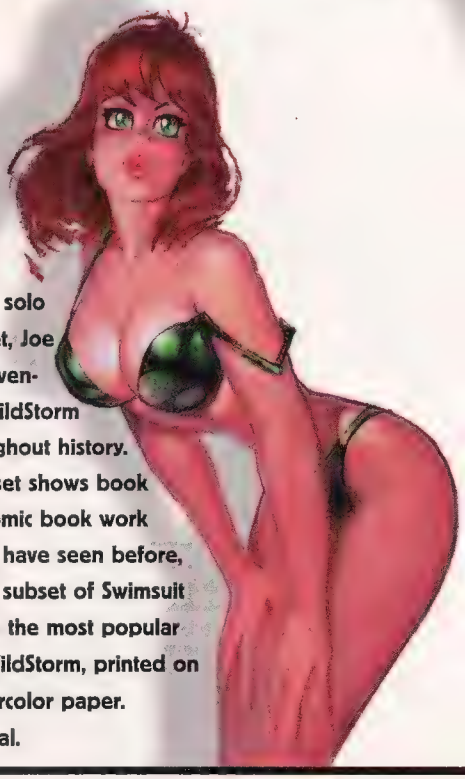

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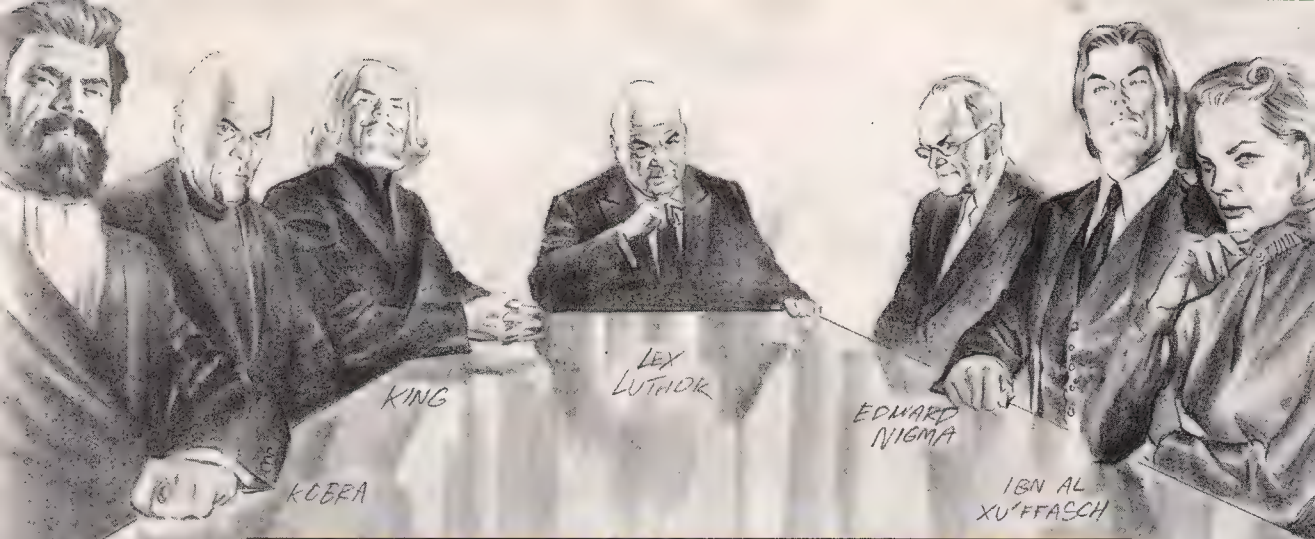
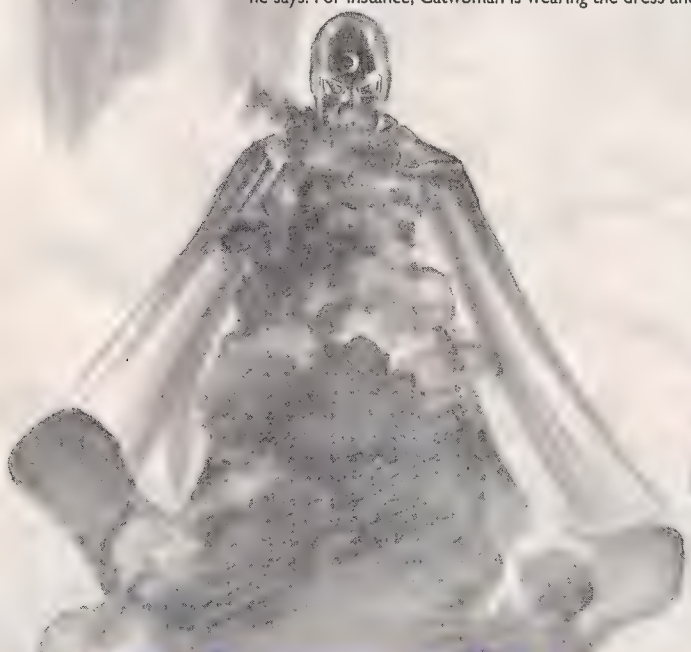


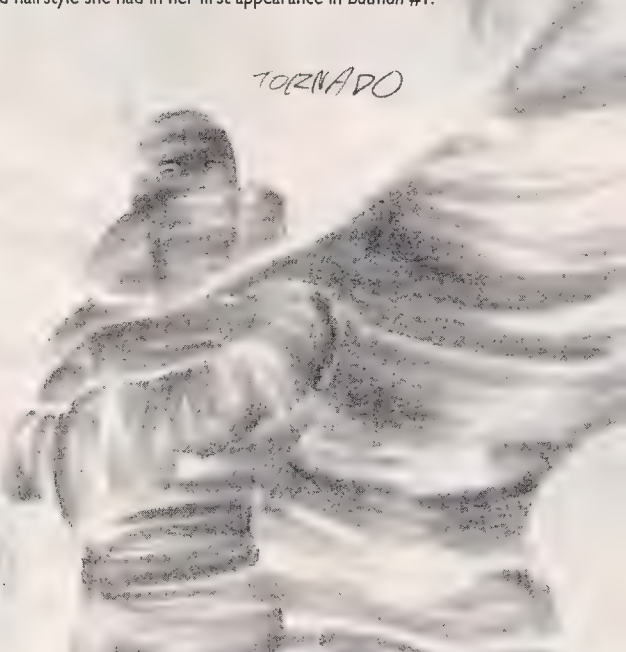
THE MANKIND LIBERATION FRONT

Waid made a strong case for including some incarnation of supervillains, so between them they created this organization, composed of key bad guys. Ross dressed them as aloof businessmen and pictured them as he thought they might age. "Even without their costumes, I was able to work in many aspects of their personalities and histories," he says. For instance, Catwoman is wearing the dress and hairstyle she had in her first appearance in *Batman* #1.



▲DR. MIDNIGHT III

"I wanted to do something completely different with this character," Ross says. "Since *Infinity Inc.* had reinvented him as a female, and Red Robin's costume looks a lot like the original version of Dr. Midnight, I decided to go in a different direction and play up his smoke bombs." The new Midnight consists of only the mask and cape, with black smoke billowing from beneath. Ross took a similar approach to Dr. Fate. "They both exist as voids with stuff flowing out of their capes," he explains. "As with Red Tornado and Dr. Fate, I would expect Dr. Midnight to be known only by his last name, which sums up his character."

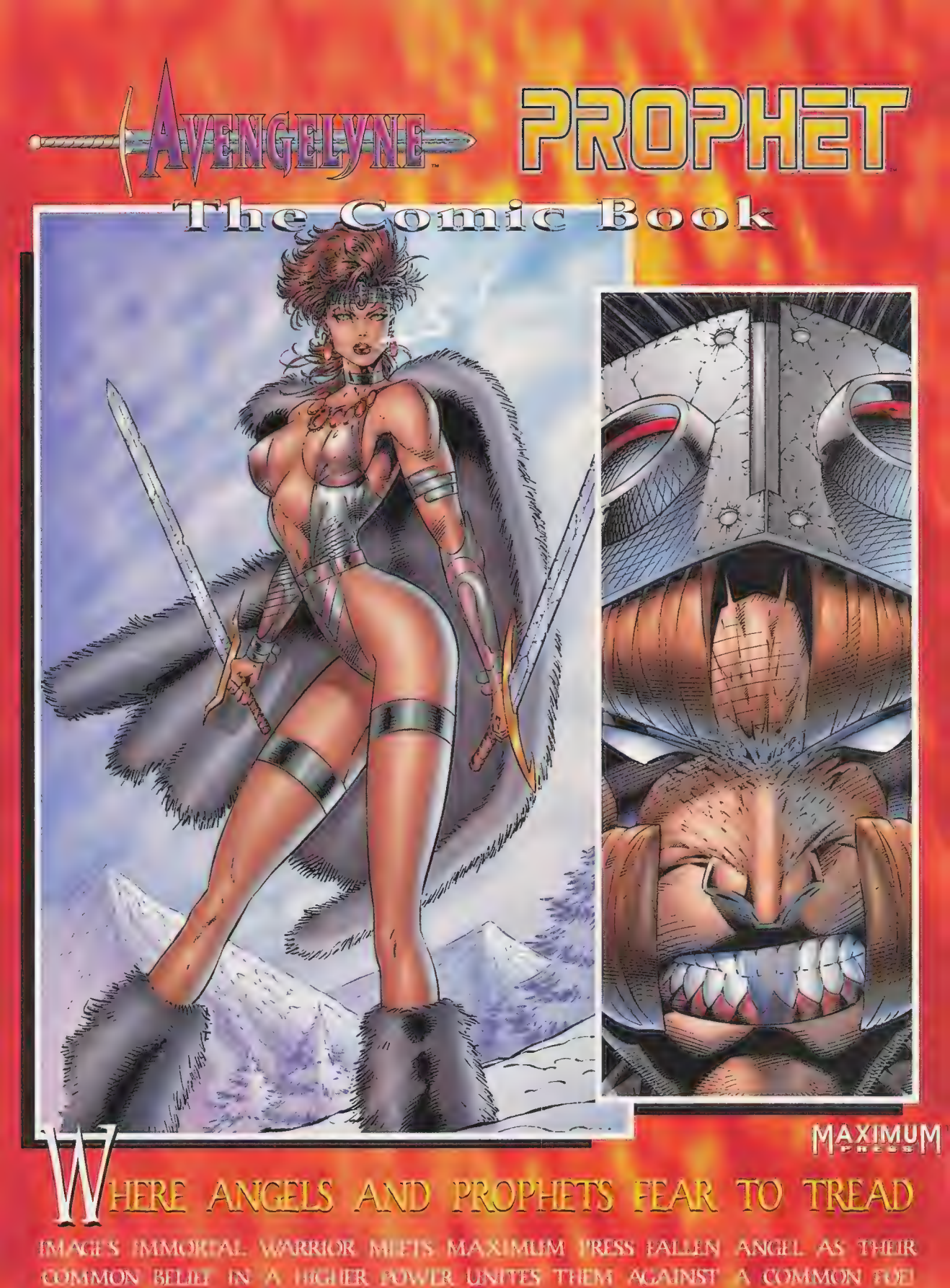


▲RED TORNADO

Ross deconstructed this hero back to one of his several origins, in which he embodied a living tornado. "He's the physical manifestation without the shell," he explains. "But he retains the image of the body with the cloak and flared boots." The red and purple color scheme pays homage to the original 1940s Red Tornado, rather than the later red/blue/yellow version. He also created a new, younger Red Tornado, a female with long red hair, who serves as a protégé.

For a full-blown, jam-packed article on *Kingdom Come*, including writer Mark Waid's thoughts on the characters, come back next issue. And if that ain't enough, these two words should do the trick: full color. W

Craig Shutt, who also exposed the world of Kane *in this issue, is a kinda-powerful hero who tries not to interfere in routine matters.*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By Brian Douglas Ahern

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THE WIZARD Q&A:

THE MAN WHO KILLED SUPERMAN REFLECTS ON HIS SHORT SPIDEY STINT, A *FANTASTIC FOUR* DREAM PROJECT AND BEING A 'STORY GUY'

BY JIM McLAUCHLIN

Dan Jurgens killed Superman. And it was the best thing to ever happen to him.

Sure, during the 1980s, Jurgens gained a solid reputation with stints on DC Comics' *Warlord* and *Booster Gold*. Yet it was the demise of the Man of Steel that elevated him from "serviceable penciler and writer" to "comic household name."

The "Death of Superman," once it was noticed by the mass media, started a nationwide frenzy that went beyond a strict comic audience and made Jurgens a major player in the industry.

He parlayed his success into jobs on other big projects, going on to write and pencil *Zero Hour*, a major DC crossover involving practically all the company's characters, and from there to *Solar, Man of the Atom* for Acclaim Comics, turning Solar's continuity on its ear. He stayed with *Superman* as writer and recently became the first creator ever to simultaneously work on monthly Superman and Spider-Man books when he started in on *Sensational Spider-Man*, a new title created especially for Jurgens.

But Jurgens' status quo has changed. He's since left *Solar* after only nine months ("at Acclaim's request," says Jurgens). He is already leaving his tailor-made Spider-title. His docket is emptier than it has been in years, yet rumors of new projects swirl about him. *Wizard* recently caught up with Dan Jurgens to chew the fat.

DAN JURGENS

WIZARD: You've been involved in many big comic events. You were there for the Death of Superman, you wrote and drew *Zero Hour*, you did the *Superman vs. Aliens* crossover, you are penciling part of the massive Marvel/DC crossover, and Marvel created a new Spider-title for you with *Sensational Spider-Man* #0. Do you circulate around the big event or does it circulate around you?

DAN JURGENS I'm not as much an event guy as a story guy. "The Death of Superman" is something that was definitely story-driven, that myself and the other Superman writers, artists and editors came up with. [DC Editor-in-Chief] Jenette Kahn was there as we developed the idea and gave us the green light. That later became the story, and eventually the story became the event.

Zero Hour was a story idea I put together and went to DC with. They said, "Yeah," so again we start with the story and see how it runs from there. *Zero Hour* became a big month-long event, with zero issues in all the DC Universe titles. In every case, I come in with a story idea and hopefully, if the idea works, then it becomes an event. If you try and create it the other way—from the event down—those things generally fall apart. You need a solid story first and foremost. I think in this industry in the last couple of years, we have seen a great deal of people trying to create an "event"

all by itself without a story. It just doesn't work that way, and we've all been hurt by it.

Sensational Spider-Man, essentially a title that Marvel created for you, and after only seven months you are off of it. Why so quickly?

Couple of reasons. Having never spent any real amount of time at Marvel, this was a bit of a trial run anyway. I think we all went into it hoping that I would be there a long time, and that things would work out. But in those short months that I have been there, things have obviously changed a great deal at Marvel. [*EDITOR'S NOTE: Jurgens is referring to massive layoffs at Marvel along with its licensing deal with Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld.*]

On top of that, I would say there were just creative differences between myself and the editors of the books in terms of what the Spider-Man story should be, in terms of where Spider-Man should go and how fast he should get there. Since I got there, it seemed to me that the clone thing was not something that worked out as well as it could have, and it probably was a mistake. I wanted to get back to Peter Parker being Spider-Man, and Peter always having been the real Spider-Man, if that is possible. Sometimes you can have very good editors and very good writers in place, but that writer may not get along with that editor or vice versa. They just might not have the same vision of the book. I'd say that is what happened here. I must also add that the agreement between Marvel and me was only through issue #6 anyway.

"I WANTED TO GET BACK TO PETER PARKER BEING SPIDER-MAN, AND PETER ALWAYS HAVING BEEN THE REAL SPIDER-MAN, IF THAT IS POSSIBLE."

You were very proud to have been writing both Superman and Spider-Man simultaneously. Is there an emotional side to this? Was it a disappointment to leave Spider-Man?

Yeah, and one of the reasons was that I have always had a track record of going to a book and being around for a while and I had just come off sort of a disappointment at Acclaim Comics where I went in and did *Solar* for a short time.

As a fan and reader, I always felt cheated if a creator came on for five or six issues and then took off. As a fan, I always felt cheated if the artist was only there for two issues and then would take one issue off and then come back. I remember those feelings. I think this is an industry that really depends on the idea of the creator being there every issue for the long haul, to really develop that character and to develop that momentum of a storyline that a book needs. I regret that it didn't work out because I sort of feel like I failed in an effort to deliver that.

Your past track record definitely differs from your recent one. *Sensational Spider-Man* only seven months, *Solar* only nine months. What's with the sudden change? Do you suddenly have a lack of commitment to your projects?

In both the Spider-Man and Solar cases, we are dealing with an extreme set of circumstances that reflects very much the state of the industry today. With *Solar*, I went to Acclaim with a plan from the start that said, "Come on to *Solar*, provide for the title a little bit, bring some new characters onto it and then spin these new characters off into their own directions." We introduced new characters in *Solar*. In fact, the first issue of a miniseries featuring one of those characters, The Sentry, is done. But it will probably never see the light of day. Again, because Acclaim has been greatly affected by the down state of the industry.

Spider-Man is the same sort of situation. I got there, there were changes in the industry and Marvel obviously reacted to those changes. But now they're doing things that I think are quite injurious to the industry in the short term and in the long term as well.

Contrast *Solar* and *Sensational Spider-Man*, if you can, with *Superman*. *Superman* is a title that you have been on for years. What's the difference there?

The big difference among the three of them as characters is that Superman is almost godlike in terms of power, but reflects the best of all of us as a human being. He is a man of integrity, a man who really does believe in those supposedly cornball Midwest values. He is Clark Kent, a kid raised on a farm. He has this pure Ma and Pa Kettle-type of upbringing. I mean, his life was a Norman Rockwell painting, and he still reflects those values.

Solar is a story about a man who I think is very confused about his role in life. He becomes a god overnight and, to

Jurgens' Spider-Man had a mistaken identity

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Killing Superman was the best thing to ever happen to Jurgens

"I HAVE ALREADY WRITTEN A SUPERMAN/FF CROSSOVER BOOK THAT I MAY NEVER GET A CHANCE TO FINISH BECAUSE OF THE CHANGES AT MARVEL."

me, his stories would not be about truth or justice or fighting crime or anything else. Solar stories always would be about the journey of a person who doesn't have the rock-solid values that Clark Kent did, but had even more power. What do you do? When you can do anything, what do you do and what do you become? Solar stories are more of a personal journey.

Peter Parker in the Spider-Man stories, or Ben Reilly as I have been dealing with it, are much more about "with great power comes great responsibility." Spider-Man was born from great failure. It was Peter's failure to stop the burglar from escaping [who ultimately kills his Uncle Ben] which defines the character.

But how about on a publishing basis? The thing that stands out is the fact that you have been on *Superman* for so long, which differs from these other projects.

I don't know if it's a publishing experience. It is a people experience because you work with people. With *Superman*, it's been almost 10 years for me now. In a situation like that, you stick because you enjoy working with the people you work with on a title. When I first came into *Superman*, Mike Carlin brought me on. I enjoyed working for Mike and enjoyed working with the people at DC. In the case of *Solar*, I honestly had a good time there and really did enjoy working with some of the people at Acclaim. Unfortunately, circumstances forced a different deck of cards onto the table midway through the game. Marvel is an entirely different situation. Marvel right now seems to me to be in a state of absolute chaos on a good day, and in the sort of condition that has developed, it becomes almost impossible to do good work. As I talked about earlier, doing good work is about momentum and direction. I think there has to be a stable publisher with a stable goal in mind. That doesn't reflect my experience on Spider-Man.

As of today, you're writing *Superman* and writing *Superman* only. You are not penciling anything. Your past track record shows that you usually take on more work than that at any given time. Anything else up your sleeve?

I want to do a sequel to *Superman vs. Aliens*. I would like to do one because there is a story waiting to be told there in terms of a character I introduced named Kara. I always said I'm not doing a Superman/Aliens sequel unless inker Kevin Nowlan wants to do it too. Kevin told me a couple of weeks ago that he would like to do it, so I'm hoping there is going to be some way to pull that together.

Beyond that, there are a couple of other things moving around now that are too early to talk about. This business isn't unlike Hollywood in that when you hear about 10 different projects, nine of them fall through for one reason or another.

It has long been rumored that you are working on a revamp of the Teen Titans for DC. Any news?

Yes. We are pushing ahead on that big-time right now.

Any sort of time frame with that?

If I really had my druthers, I would like to see the first issue of this book ship in August. Don't know if I'm going to make it yet.

There are some properties out there that fans just want to like, properties that deserve to work. I think the Titans is one of those books. No one stands in line in front of me when it comes to admiration for what Marv Wolfman and George Pérez accomplished on *The New Teen Titans* in the early '80s. With what Marv and George did, with the characters that they had to play with, I think they already moved the characters beyond the point of conceptualized "teen-type" characters. So I will be doing it with all-new characters for the most part, with only one old character from the DC Universe—the Atom, who is now a 16-year-old. I'll be building it from the ground up with new characters, new stories and new directions.

Of course, the Atom became 16 years old during *Zero Hour*, which you wrote. Was this a sneaky thing you planted back then to come back to and use in a new Titans title? Or is it just happy circumstance?

It was something I wanted to use someday. Whether or not with the Titans I really don't remember.

All-new characters except for the Atom. So who are these other characters?

That is a little too early to talk about. But I hope it reflects a unique approach that lives up to the legacy that we've inherited. That should be easy, now that George Pérez is slated as the inker on the series.

You've done Superman and Spider-Man, probably the two most high-profile

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comic characters around. What is the unconquered territory in comics? Any one thing out there you want to do?

In terms of comics, one book that I always have wanted to work on was *Fantastic Four*. To me, the FF always embodied the best pure concept in comics because it was a family book. It was about a brother and a sister, a husband and a wife, two old friends. And it was a story that you could tell from any of their perspectives. In the *FF*, you could do an issue that was a story about nothing more than Reed Richards' birthday. You could do a birthday story and in there have a flashback to Reed's 21st birthday that brought Ben Grimm into the picture and builds to something now. You could have stories that small, or stories of cosmic magnitude that affect the entire universe. There are not many books out there that offer such wide parameters. Because of that, I always have wanted to do the *FF*.

As a matter of fact, I have already written a Superman/FF crossover book that I may never get a chance to finish because of the changes at Marvel. Just for old time's sake, I had even hoped we could publish it in the old large "Treasury" size format, just for fun.

As we have already touched on, comics from a market standpoint are at a very low ebb. Most people would say the industry's at a 20- or 25-year low point. What is your take on the state of the comic market right now? Is it at a bottom point? Is this cyclical?

Comics have always been cyclical. What seems to have hurt us more than was necessary in this swing was Marvel's absolute reckless attitude toward the marketplace, in things like buying their own distributor and then instituting other terms and practices once they had done so. *All* the fault does not lie with Marvel. A lot of companies shot up like a rocket for a while, and now we're going down like a rocket. That's comics' cyclical nature and it was bound to happen. But Marvel has certainly taken it farther and deeper than we had to go. It's tough out there. There are a lot of real hard stories. We all know professionals right now, freelances and editors alike, who don't have jobs and are looking. Eventually the only thing that will pull us out of this downturn is just plain old good material.

It really does come down to the product. We have to be able to deliver good, entertaining stuff at a good price, just like anybody else. To me, it's a simple business equation. Have comics gotten too expensive? Yeah, they probably have. A few years ago there were three Superman books a month at 75 cents apiece. If you were a monthly reader of Superman, it cost you a total investment of $2.25 per month. Now, we're kicking out four or five books a month, asking a hell of a lot more from our readers. On an issue-by-issue basis, maybe a $2 cover price doesn't seem so much. But when you add it all up, it's tough. If something's going to bear that kind of price, you have got to make the product worth it. That means it's got to be fun, it's got to be entertaining. I think we have to look at more self-contained stories instead of taking a character and spreading him out into umpteen different books a month. We have to somehow find a way to make the whole industry fun again. We have to give it time and work our way out of it with good material.

Along those lines, what would you say is the good stuff these days?

I would say right now my favorite read is *Sandman Mystery Theatre*. I think it has one of the nicest-paced relationships between two people [Wesley Dodds and Dian Belmont] that I have ever seen done in a monthly book. I'm terribly intrigued by what writer/artist Dave Lapham is doing in *Stray Bullets*. *Egypt*, the Vertigo series which no one seems to talk about, is something I have been enjoying as well.

After what [writer] Mark Waid has done, *Captain America* has been interesting. I love Waid's *Impulse* and I think his *Flash* is obviously strong. I think *Legion of Super-Heroes* and *Legionnaires* right now are very strong.

Over at Marvel, I have always gotten a kick out of a couple of the X-books. Everyone rips them for being unintelligible and everything, but there are a couple of them that I think work very well; *Wolverine*, for some reason, is a book that I have always liked. And I've always been a sucker for any material from Dark Horse's Legend imprint too.

Some of the first things out of your mouth were Vertigo titles. You seem to like that genre. Any possible Vertigo projects you might be looking to do?

I keep on thinking I should give it a whirl, just to see if I could. I think it is important creatively to try some of those things. There are a couple of things in the back of my mind. But if I ever tried to do something like that, the marketplace might just go nuts. "What? Dan Jurgens is doing a Vertigo book?" When I hear that, then that's when I talk DC into it. [*Laughs*]

But you know, it's also necessary to realize that Vertigo works for older readers and I'm quickly becoming an older reader. I'm 36 years old. Some of the things I have to say might fit better in the Vertigo style than the style of a guy who wears a red cape.

For better or worse, you're still "The Man Who Killed Superman," though.

I don't get tired of hearing it so much. It's not a terrible burden to bear. But it is something that I hope I will be able to grow out of. I would hate it if, for the next 15 years, I was still known as "that guy who killed Superman," because it might mean I didn't do much since then. I would not like that to be the case. I'm going to make sure that's not the case. W

Jim McLauchlin tried changing clothes in a phone booth once, just like Superman does. He was released after posting $300 for bail.

Solar, Man of the Atom

VITAL STATS

Name:
Dan Jurgens

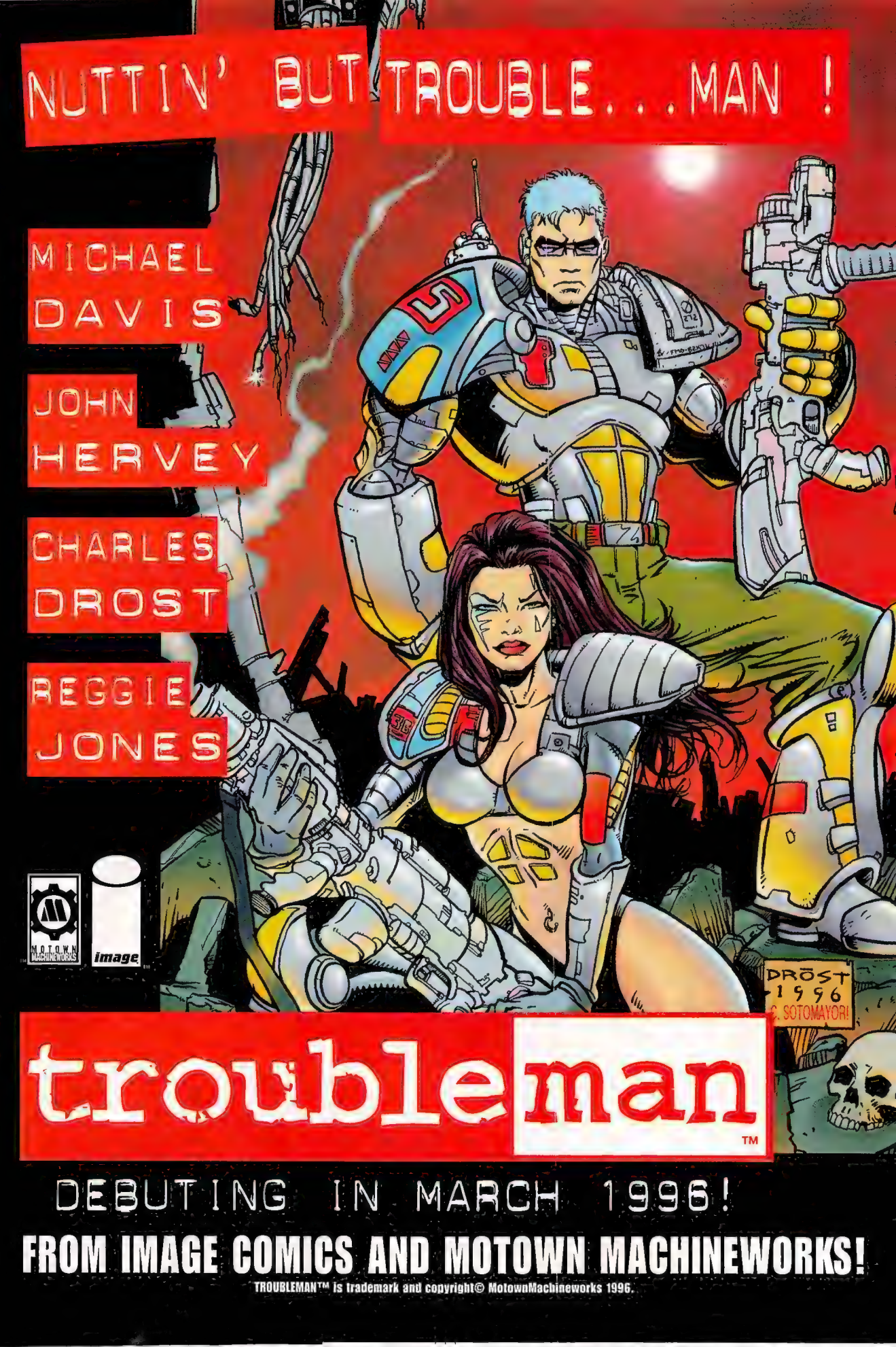
Occupation:
Writer and artist

Date of Birth:
June 27, 1959 in Ortonville, Minn.

Base of Operations:
Minneapolis, Minn.

Career Highlights:
Killing Superman in *Superman #75*, rearranging DC continuity in *Zero Hour*, *Superman vs. Aliens* and co-penciling the *Marvel versus DC* crossover mini-series.

Favorite Pizza Topping:
Pepperoni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How to Make a HOMEMADE HERO

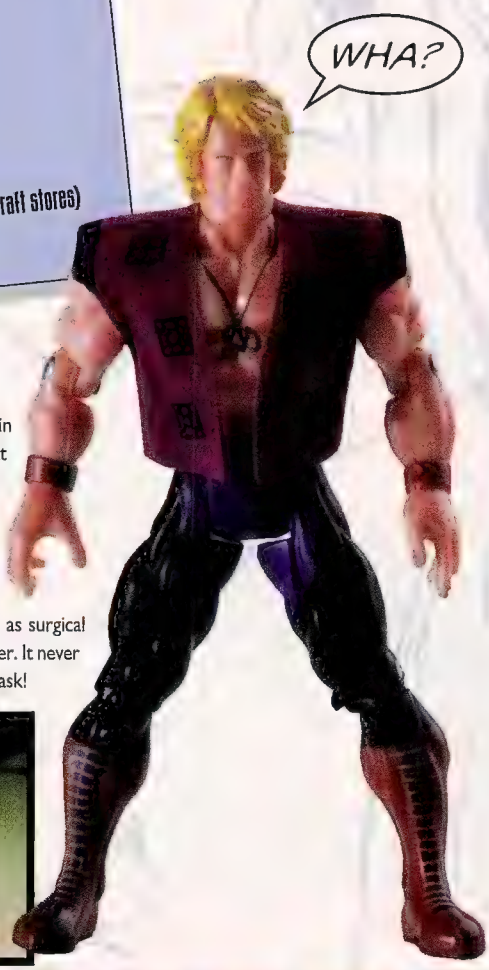
Create your own custom-made action figure in five easy steps

By Chris Spaseff

Ingredients

Most of this stuff is available at good art supply and hobby stores:

1. X-Acto knife with a #11 blade
2. Safety glasses
3. Dremel tool (optional)
4. Clay modeling tools or metal dental picks
5. Sandpaper in various grit
6. Nail sanding blocks (available in various grits at beauty supply stores)
7. Frisket tack paper
8. Milliput and/or Super Sculpey
9. Sandable primer paint
10. Acrylic paints
11. Airbrush (optional)
12. Assortment of brushes
13. Small needle files
14. 4-inch clear plastic globe (the type used to make homemade ornaments, available at craft stores)
15. Some 1/8-inch to 3/4-inch-wide styrene (available at hobby stores)
16. Some bristol board or thin white cardboard (available at any good art supply store)



FIRST THINGS FIRST: You have to select a character to do, so I picked Captain America for demonstration purposes. I then went to a local Toys R Us and chose a figure that looked the most like a major portion of the character I wanted to do. When making your own figures, you may need to add arms or legs or a head in order to yield the least amount of carving so you can reach your goal. For Captain America, I chose the Iolaus figure from Toy Biz's Hercules line because he has the perfect physique for making Cap.

And before we start, a lot of the steps in making a custom figure can be very dangerous, so if you don't have experience in handling X-Acto knives (which are about as razor sharp as surgical scalpels) or Dremel Tools, please ask for help from your parents, an older friend or an art teacher. It never hurts to wear safety glasses when doing this. Remember SAFETY FIRST—if you don't know, ask!

STEP 1: *Cut Off Unwanted Parts*

The first thing you do is start carving off Iolaus' unwanted parts. Using a coffee cup of hot water (put it in the microwave and heat for 2-3 minutes on high), stick Iolaus' head into the water and hold there for a few minutes. Using your X-Acto Knife with a #11 blade, carefully carve away his blonde hair enough so you have almost a rounded head. Work slowly and carefully—and always carve *away* from yourself so you don't carve up your hands.

Sand all body molding lines, which look like mini-seams. You need to sand all conspicuous body seam lines on top of the shoulders, the front of the thighs, the back of the calves and down the shoulders. Use a small file and sand it smooth with a nail file block.

STEP 2: *Apply Putty to Head*

When you're finished sanding the body, you need to apply some modeling putty. I use Milliput brand but if you can't find that, you can use Super Sculpey brand. The difference is that if you use Super Sculpey, you must hand dry the parts using a hair dryer. (NOTE: Do not bake it in the oven or you'll end up with a melted ball of plastic!) Milliput hardens without heat, but will harden a lot faster if you heat it with a hot hair dryer. Milliput will also harden a great deal more than the Super Sculpey.

Start by putting down a small glob of the putty and smooth it over the head. Both products respond better if you put your finger or the modeling tools you are using in water and keep it moist as you sculpt. (If you're using tools, play around with them to see which ones create the effects you desire.)

STEP 3: *Make Gloves and Boots*

When you have the top of the head smoothed out, start making the boots. Smooth out some of the putty on a wet smooth surface and pat it out to a flat pancake shape. Next, cut a rectangle shape and wrap it around the area where Cap's boots will be. Using your damp fingers or modeling tools, smooth out the boot pieces until they look the way you want them to. (With Super Sculpey, you will be able to work with it until you harden it. The Milliput will harden in about 6 hours, less time if you use a hair dryer or dry it outside on a warm day.)

To make the gloves, make the same pancake shape and cut a rectangle over the wrist and squeeze together.

Continue to smooth out the glove surfaces to form a cone shape that has a seam directly in line with his pinky finger. Cut the V-notch in his gloves after the putty has hardened.

This is a good time to fill in the holes on Iolaus' back. After the holes are filled, contour the putty to match the muscles. After the first application is dry, sand the areas gently with sandpaper (80-100 grit for Milliput, 120 for Super Sculpey). Sand carefully until the gloves and boots look good. You can apply more putty if needed.

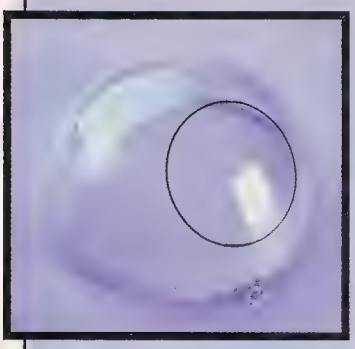
After your final application of putty, go back and sand all the surfaces that you puttied to smooth them out. But remember, don't make all the surfaces perfectly flat. Cap's gloves and boots always have some unevenness in them so, to make your figure more realistic, keep a small amount of smooth wrinkles.

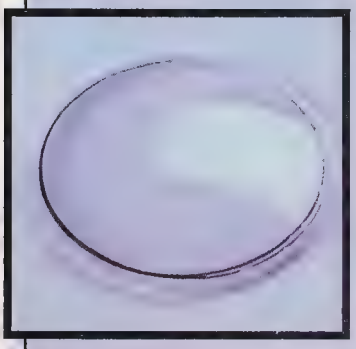
After you have sanded the gloves, boots and Cap's head, take a small amount of putty to make his ears. Study a picture (or someone around you) to note the position and shape of an ear, then use your wet tools to shape. Super Sculpey is the clear winner in making this job easier. A thin coating of a super glue, like Jet brand, over the entire ear (don't worry—the glue hugs the curves) after it has been hardened will keep it in place.

Making the Shield

Because I'm making Captain America, I also need material for his shield. So I went to a local craft store and found some clear plastic globes in two sizes. I chose the 4-inch globe for an accurate looking shield.

Take half of the 4-inch clear globe and circle template trace a 1 7/8-inch diameter circle on the globe with a thin tipped marker. To cut around the circle, I used a Dremel tool with a cut off wheel, which is a motorized high-speed grinding tool. Now that you've popped out your circle, sand around to the edge of your marker line. Do not sand past your line. Now, holding a piece of 100 grit sandpaper flat on your work area, sand the bottom edge of the disk's rim flat by moving the disk back and forth. When you reach a point that your sandpaper surface meets your marker line, you should have a perfect circle. Stop sanding the rim. Now, gently sand the entire surface with your nail block sander. It won't be clear anymore, but this makes the paint adhere better.





To make the handle for the shield, take a 2-inch piece of 1/4-inch wide styrene, a hard plastic material, and dip it into a cup of hot water. Carefully remove it from the water and bend it to the contour of Cap's right hand. Trim it down so that only 1/8-inch of material is next to the hand so that you can glue the handle to the underside of the shield. Use super glue and attach it to the shield in a spot where it looks good when he's holding it. You should let it dry in Cap's hand to make sure it is in the proper position.

To finish off the shield, you'll need to paint it in several steps. Spray the shield with white sandable primer and make a loop out of wire to hold the shield while spraying. After the shield has been fine sanded, cover the white primer with a light coat of glossy white paint on the top of the shield. Let this paint dry at least 24 hours before going to the next step.

While the paint on the shield dries, you can cut the friskets for the rings on Cap's shield. I cut the friskets out using an X-Acto and a circle template. You will need to cut four friskets as follows:

1. A piece 3 by 3-inches with a 3/4-inch diameter circle from the middle
2. A piece 3/4-inch diameter circle
3. A star that is approximately 3/4-inch in diameter
4. A ring that is 1 1/8-inch inside diameter and 1 1/2-inch outside diameter

After the paint has thoroughly dried, you can put the star in the middle of the shield and place the piece that is 3 by 3-inches with the 3/4-inch circle around the star. This will be easier if you cut a line from the circle to the outside so that you can overlap a small amount allowing for the curve of the shield.

Now you can paint your blue in the shield (remember to use many light coats rather than one thick one). After this is thoroughly dry (24 hours), remove the friskets. Finally, place the 3/4-inch diameter circle over your blue circle in the center and center the ring between the circle and the edge of the shield. Using your thin wire around the handle, proceed to paint the entire shield red, including the back and handle. ■ *CS*

STEP 4: *Priming Your Figure*

Now comes the time to start painting your figure. First, apply a coat of sprayable primer to the figure and the shield. [See sidebar] Use black sandable primer. Be sure to hit all surfaces but do not apply too much paint. It is very easy to apply too much and cause drips, so give a light dusting holding the nozzle 8-10 inches from the figure. A few light coats are much better than one thick coat.

To simplify holding the doll, I screw a #6, 1-inch drywall screw a few turns into the holes at the bottom of most action figures' feet. I then twist a piece of wire eight inches long around it and make the end into a hook. You can hold the screw while you primer the figure and then hang the hook on something while it dries.

After you primer for the last time, you'll be able to see defects very easily. If you do see any areas that need work, you can putty and sand the imperfections smooth. Then just primer those areas over again using a light spray.

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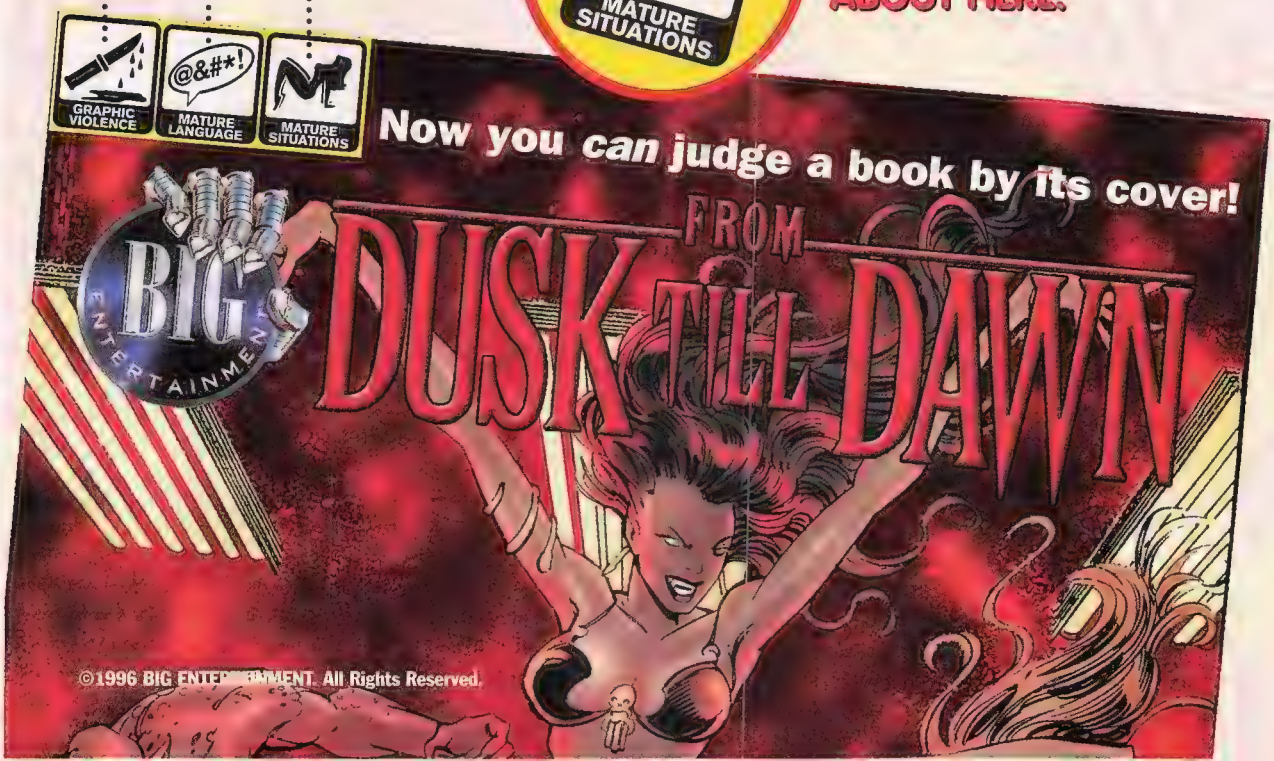

STEP 5: Painting Your Figure

Now it's time to begin applying color to your figure using the acrylic paints.

Start by applying skin tones to his face and eye areas. You can buy flesh color already mixed or just mix your own by using some white acrylic and a small amount of the color raw sienna. I thin it down with some water and airbrush it on. You can brush it on but be careful not to put it on too thick. It is recommended you don't use glossy paints on the figure as this will give you a very unrealistic look.

Next, I paint the white on the general areas where the "A" on his forehead goes, along with the star and stripes on his torso. I airbrush the color on, but you can easily apply it with a brush, remembering not to put on too much paint.

After the white paint is completely dry, I prepare for the blue paint. First I cut out an "A" and star for his chest from some clear plastic sticker sheets called frisket. I then place the cut-out "A" and star on the appropriate places on the figure. I do this because the frisket will mask those details while I slap on the blue paint. (When you lift off the frisket after the blue paint dries, you'll have a perfect outline around the white star and "A.")

With that all done, I start putting the blue paint down on the figure and, to make it more realistic, I dry brush it on. I put a small amount of paint on a dry paint brush and remove most of the paint on a piece of white cardboard. Then I start "scrubbing" the paint on. This makes the paint look more "cloth like." Paint around the star, the "A" and to an imaginary line around his lower chest where the blue stops for the red and white stripes. Leave some skin around the eyes and his mask on his face. Paint his pants the same way as you did the rest of his body.

After the blue has dried, you can paint Cap's eyes. First, start with some ivory for the whites of his eyes. After the ivory is dry, put a small dot of light blue where the irises are. Then come back with a black dot so only a small line of blue shows around it. Finish off Cap's lips with a light pink wash. (A "wash" is a small quantity of paint thinned down with water.)

When the blue paint is dry, it's time to paint his gloves, boots and the stripes on his stomach and back.

Finish the paint job on Cap's body by painting a thin black line where his belt should be.

Now for the finishing touch: Take a piece of Bristol board or thin white cardboard and cut the two wings for the sides of Cap's head. Glue these in the correct position on his head using the super glue. You might have to touch up with blue paint on the areas where you've applied glue.

One more thing: If you plan to handle your figure often, a light spray coating of a flat or satin clear paint will make the paint job last longer.

AND THAT'S THAT. Not too tough, right? Heck, you don't even need all the professional tools in the world. All you really need is your creativity—the most important tool of all—and you've all that it takes to make your own custom-made action figure. Good luck!

Chris Spaseff is a frequent contributor to Wizard's *"Homemade Heroes" section. He plays with dolls.*

[NOW THE FURIOUS DINO-BEASTS ARE RAGING ACTION FIGURES FROM PLAYMATES]

SLASHED, CHEWED, RIPPED, GNAWED AND DEVOURED. THAT'S IF YOU WIN.

So you think you're pretty tasty, huh? We'll be the judge of that. Because only the winner of the Primal Rage™ Follower Feast contest will have their image digitized for appearance in the Primal Rage™ 2 video game as one of the worshipful, and ultimately edible, followers. Losers, however, must content themselves with merely fantasizing about being torn limb from limb.

TIME WARNER INTERACTIVE

http://www. playmatestoys. com

Playmates

GRAND PRIZE:

You and a companion will be flown to San Jose, California to spend a day at Time Warner Interactive with the Primal Rage Team. At the end of the day you will be videotaped and digitized to become a Follower in Primal Rage™ 2!

FIRST PRIZE:

You can win an original Primal Rage authentic arcade video game for your own home.

SECOND PRIZE:

Ten winners will each receive a complete set of Playmates' new Primal Rage action figures.

THIRD PRIZE:

Ten winners will each receive a Sega Genesis Primal Rage game cartridge.

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PRIMAL RAGE OFFICIAL CONTEST RULES

1. Please read rules and requirements carefully.
2. Return this official entry form or enter via the Playmates website at http://www.playmatestoys.com. Playmates not responsible for lost, late, illeligible, incomplete, mutilated, postage due or misdirected mail. Illeligible entry forms and entries not satisfying all contest rules automatically disqualified.
3. Mail to: Primal Rage Contest, Playmates Toys, Inc., 16200 S. Trojan Way, La Mirada, CA 90638. Entries must be received by May 31, 1996. All entries become sponsor property; none returned. Winners will be notified by phone.
4. Prize Structure: Grand Prize (1 Winner) Appearance in the next Primal Rage arcade game. Includes round trip air travel to San Jose, CA, hotel accommodations, and transportation to/from TWI for two persons, along with a tour of TWI and a studio session in which the winner will be videotaped for an appearance in the sequel to Primal Rage. Winner responsible for all expenses not specified herin. ($4,000 approx. retail value). First Prize: (1 Winner) The original Primal Rage arcade video game ($2,499 approx. retail value). Second Prize: (10 Winners) Each of ten winners will receive a complete set of ten Primal Rage action figures. ($70 approx. retail value). Third Prize: (10 Winners) Each of ten winners will receive a Primal Rage Sega Genesis game cartridge ($64.99 appox. retail value). Taxes are winners' responsibility. One prize per household or family.
5. Contest open to U.S. residents in Continental United States; void where prohibited, licensed or restricted by law. Employees of Playmates Toys, Inc., and Time Warner, their subsidiaries, affiliates, advertising, and promotional agencies, the immediate families of same not eligible. If a minor, grand prize trip winner must be accompanied by parent or guardian.
6. Trip prize must be booked 30 days in advance and taken by July 15th, 1996. Bookings subject to availability; all arrangements by sponsor options, prizes not transferable. No prize substitutions or cash redemption.
7. For a winners list, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Playmates Toys, Inc., 16200 S. Trojan Way, La Mirada, CA 90638.
8. By entering participants automatically consent to use of name, photo, and/or likeness for advertising uses without additional consent.

OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

Name (Please Print Clearly)

Address **Apt. #**

City **State** **Zip** (Required)

Telephone **Age** **Date**

Contestant's Signature (Under 18-parent/guardian signature)

Which Primal Rage Beast Is Your Favorite?

A Toy's Story

There's plenty of action in the making of every Toy Biz figure

By Rob Allstetter

You'd think these things were Pearl Jam tickets. Action figures are so popular these days that people have been seen waiting in line before a store opens, just to buy the latest assortment. With a growing collector's market that demands increasingly better and varied pieces with every assortment, and a ravenous kids audience longing to get its hands on characters seen on television, the usually cyclical action figure market has hit new heights.

Competition is fierce, with Toy Biz's Marvel figures among the leaders. But don't think any less care or creativity is put into a Wolverine action figure than is put into a Wolverine comic book.

"It is an art form—absolutely," says Toy Biz's Avi Arad, and he should know. Arad might be to action figures what Stan Lee is to comics, with a storied history in the toy field. Together, he and Lee also head up Marvel's television and film projects, the main feeding ground for Marvel toys.

As majority owner and head honcho of Toy Biz, Arad oversees arguably the third-largest toy company in America. He's very hands-on with his figures, from conceptualization to final product.

But how exactly is an action figure made? "There's a lot more involved than one realizes in making a toy," says Toy Biz's Frank Chernek.

No kidding. *Wizard* tracked the entire production process of a Toy Biz figure, and there are literally hundreds of steps. We don't want to lose you on the assembly line, though, so here are just the basics.

1. SELECTION

About a dozen representatives of Marvel and Toy Biz meet in New York to hash out which characters will be produced.

"Marvel is wonderful. They come prepared with a whole binder filled with references for all the figures we could do for the year," says Joanne McLaughlin, Toy Biz's vice president of product development. "We're looking to do four assortments a year on X-Men, so we're looking for 20 figures. And they may come with a book that has 100 different options."

Things can get a bit heated, though, when it's tough to separate business from pleasure.

"Most of the guys in these meetings are fanboys," says McLaughlin. "They've been reading comic books since they were little kids and they would love to see the most unusual, odd character made.

"But the collector market isn't the largest part of the market; you get the largest volume from the children. You have to make sure you have a really strong mix. You can always throw one of those characters that may not be what you would call a classic X-Men character for the collector, but you better make sure the other ones are classic X-Men characters that are geared toward the children."

So really, the first reason for selecting a figure is its character's popularity. Other important criteria include how visual the character is—a coolness factor—and what kind of accessories or actions it might have.

McLaughlin admits that selecting X-Men figures can be a bit easier than picking a Spider-Man line.

"X-Men has a bottomless pit of characters," she says. "You can do Wolverine about 15 different ways. You can do a lot of the characters a number of different ways, and every few years they revamp costumes in the comic books anyway."

2. DESIGNING

Marvel provides Toy Biz with three-views (pencil drawings that show the character from the front, side and back) and color-ups.

"It's always done by a Marvel artist," says Gary Black, creative director at Marvel, who walks the few New York City blocks from Marvel's offices to Toy Biz at least twice a week. "We try to get someone appropriate for the characters or, in some cases, the person who's actually drawing the book."

In fact, Ron Lim did the three-views for the X-Men 2099 line, while Art Adams has done them for an upcoming Incredible Hulk line.

The three-views are turned over to Toy Biz artists, who then do control art, which is used as a guide by the sculptor.

"As we get the three-views, we write on them whether they're going to have neck, shoulder, knee or waist articulation. We'll say whether they're going to have a kick or punch or no action. Maybe their accessory has the action," says McLaughlin. "Then we'll send it off to an artist, who does the control art based on all the elements we want to put into the character. They'll draw it up with all the articulation points, buttons and activation points."

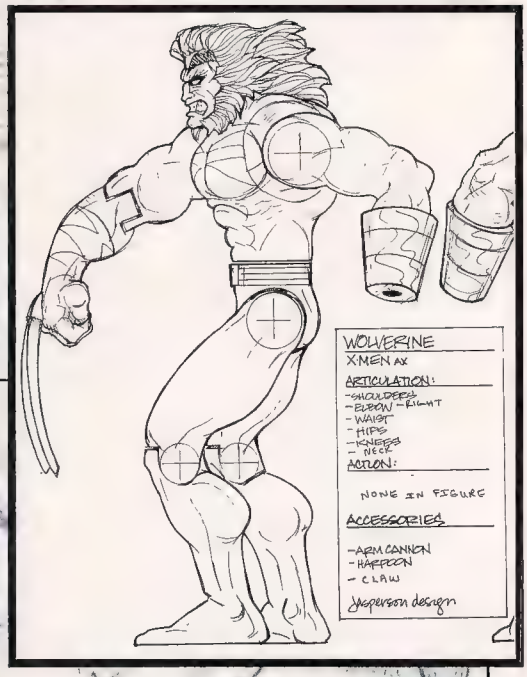
The three-views and control art serve as blueprints for the next step.

3. SCULPTING

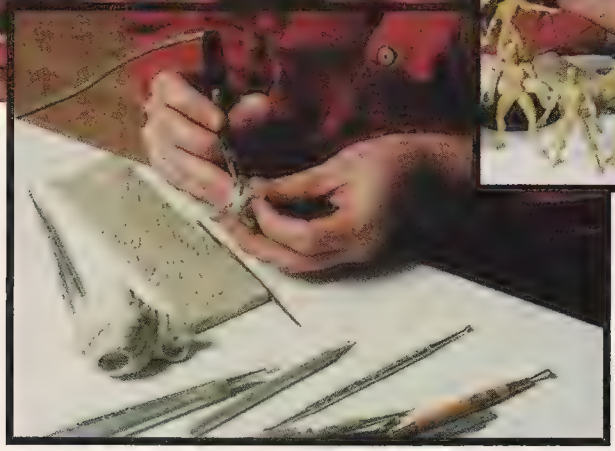
Steve Kiwus, a former jeweler, is one of Toy Biz's exclusive ace sculptors. The Minnesota native's studio will produce at least 72 figures for Toy Biz this year. Over the last five years, he's sculpted some 300 Marvel figures, including nearly a dozen Wolverines and his current favorites from an upcoming Venom line.

"We Santa's elves keep busy," Kiwus says, laughing. "I've never gotten a hard number, but [the amount of] people who make a living as a toy sculptor maybe number 100. It's a highly specialized field."

After receiving the control art, Kiwus makes the armature, or the plastic mechanical parts that move. They are made on a lathe and machined



The initial designs are drawn by a Marvel artist (shown below), and are then sent to Toy Biz where control drawings showing all of the separate parts and articulation are drawn (at right)



so they turn perfectly. He then takes those parts, puts clay over them and forms a rough sculpture that begins to look like the figure.

The sculptor creates several versions of the figure in a variety of materials to prepare for manufacturing

A rubber mold is made from the clay, all plastic joints are taken out of the clay, and the clay is destroyed. Then the joints are put back into the mold and wax is poured in, making a replica of the clay sculpture in wax.

"That's when I really start sculpting. I start putting details in and make the face look like the character's face," Kiwus says.

When that's completed, it's sent to New York for approval and changes. Kiwus then makes another set of molds, and into those molds are cast a urethane material, which is a hard plastic.

Four sets of the final version of parts are made. Two go to Hong Kong for tooling, and the other two head to New York for paint masters. One of the two paint masters is sent to Hong Kong, while the other stays in New York for reference.

Kiwus says he can do a figure in as quickly as half a week. "You're not going to find [anyone] faster," he says. "That's why Toy Biz and I have the relationship we do because I can produce these things almost at the rate they need them."

4. MANUFACTURING

Toy Biz does not actually make the figures itself. The company sub-contracts some 25 different toy manufacturers, or vendors, in Hong Kong and the Pacific Rim.

"By the time the figure has been decorated, molded, assembled, packed out and inspected," says Chernek, executive vice president of manufacturing, who is located in Hong Kong, "you could have over 300 people touch a figure."

The entire manufacturing process, which includes the packaging and shipping, takes approximately 31 weeks.

The process begins with a "final turnover package," which is supplied by Toy Biz to the vendors for bids. The package includes a speculation sheet that details functions of each figure and a colored rendering showing decoration, as well as the package design and the assortment shipping mix.

Once a vendor is selected, the first step is to make a steel mold from the sculpture (or pattern). This is slowly and meticulously made with a stylist tool—part of a panograph machine that has two arms, one that follows the pattern of the sculpture and the other that duplicates it and cuts the pattern into the steel.

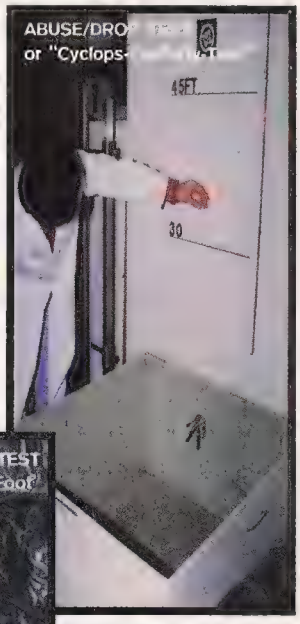
Some 50 "first shots," sample figures, are then made to see what the figures look like, how the parts fit together, and how they work. After evaluations, changes are passed on and the vendor makes corrections. Fifty more pieces are made and submitted for another round of evaluations.

The molds are then corrected and another sampling is made, called the "final engineering pilot." One last set of evaluations is made before the final adjustments are made for the molds.

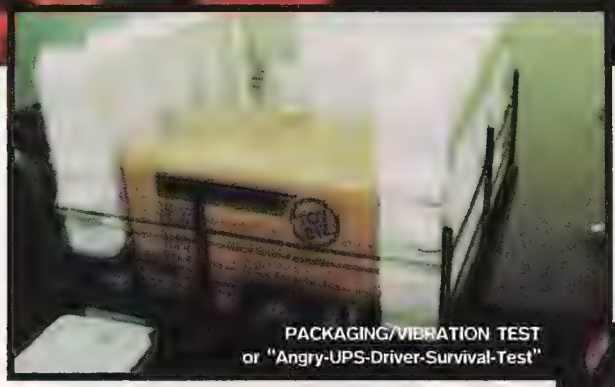
Three hundred pieces are then run for the "pilot production run" and final approval. At this time, figures are submitted to testing labs, where they are checked for safety, reliability (testing functions for 500 cycles), abuse (drops from 36 inches), aging (figures are subjected to hot and cold temperatures) and environmental safety (to make sure the figures don't contain too many "heavy" elements like lead). Shipping cartons are also tested for vibrations and drops.

After passing these tests and getting final approval from the product manager, the factory begins actual production, which lasts about two weeks. In addition to machinery, all of the figures are hand-painted.

On-site inspection of production is done by a third party, which duplicates many of the tests. Then, as Chernek says, "We put them on the boat."



The figures go through many stages in manufacturing, including a barrage of safety and endurance tests before final production can begin



PACKAGING/VIBRATION TEST
or "Angry-UPS-Driver-Survival-Test"

FINAL PRODUCTION
or "Everyone-Put-On-A-Raspberry-Beret-And-Get-Crackin' "

ON THE SHELVES
Packaged, delivered, and ready for action

After the rigors of testing, production, packaging, shipping and distribution, the toys hit the stores, and then the streets

5. PACKAGING

"A successful package is one you don't feel like throwing away," says Arad. "The package should immediately yell at you, 'Wow!' From our point of view, this is as good as a good comic book cover."

The packages, which are made in Hong Kong simultaneously to the figures, have come a long way in just two years. They're made in different sizes with die-cuts and varying blister shapes and sizes. Latest innovations include posing the figure inside the blister or embossing the blister with an X (for X-Men) or 4 (for Fantastic Four).

"My first goal is to make the package look different," says Chris Fondacaro, vice president of creative service for Toy Biz. "With everything out there, you have to make it look fresh."

The packages usually carry a biography—supplied by Creative Director Black and Marvel—and technical information about how the figure works. They also show other figures in assortments, which can sometimes backfire when a figure like U.S.Agent or Dan Ketch is held back after the package has been made.

Fondacaro knows that even though a package can help a product, the figure itself is what must ultimately pass the true test.

"The figures are so strong and the detail is great," he says. "They really give you a lot to work with."

And a lot to work on. W

After researching this article, Rob Allstetter is prepared to report the entire Far East to the cops for all the Child Labor Laws that are being broken on a daily basis.

TOY Quiz

The quest for knowledge resides in us all. Yes, even when it comes to toys. So Wizard decided to ask Avi Arad and Joanne McLaughlin at Toy Biz those frequently asked questions that have been bugging toy collectors for quite some time.

Q: Why go with obscure figures like Phalanx Cameron Hodge and Senyaka, when there are no updated big guns like Thor, Hulk and Daredevil?

AA: What we are waiting for is a reason—an event, a show, a movie—to drive more of our characters, and as these events take place, we'll introduce the appropriate toys.

Q: Is there a rule that every action figure must have an action device?

JM: Things are shifting away from actual actions to accessories, which is a shame because the actions are what kids really like. But the perceived value, when you look at a package, is visual. The more you get, the more value it has.

Q: You've had "Age of Apocalypse" figures based on the X-Men comic books. How strongly do the comics affect the toy lines?

AA: That part we absolutely don't follow. We believe that Spider-Man, for example, has a life via the cartoon show. Publishing has different needs, different responsibilities. Unless we feel a publishing event can have such an impact on the toy universe, we don't feel an obligation to stay with the books in areas.

Q: Why not an Avengers line, or is that blanketed under Iron Man?

AA: Eventually, there will be an Avengers line.

Q: Are figures of women hard to sell?

JM: Everybody backed off female action figures three years ago because this was a boy's market and they figured little boys would not want to play with the female action figures. Well, that turned around real fast. The collector market is growing stronger, and the children want these females. Rogue, Storm, Phoenix and all the female characters we've produced have done tremendously well.

Q: Why is distribution of characters like Rhino and Whirlwind so sporadic?

AA: The assortments are both geared toward the mass audience and toward what I call our "geeks," who know Rhino. Kids don't necessarily know Rhino, so less are produced. That creates shortages because our job is with the six-year-old, who will be a lot more enamored with Spider-Man than Rhino. But the 20-year-old who wants to have every figure will want Rhino.■ *RA*

WIZARD CRUEL & UNUSUAL PET TEST
or "Mutant-Cat-Chow"

THE TOY CHEST

SPECIAL REPORT: TOY FAIR '96

ICAN INTERNATIONAL
OY FAIR™

BUDDY SCALERA
WIZARD PRESS

How crazy is Toy Fair? Just ask Todd McFarlane. There he was greeting people at the McFarlane Toys showroom while sitting at a drawing table inking pages 10 and 11 of *Spawn* #43. Psychedelic lights in the shape of Spawn logos swirled about him as he worked. "I've got to get this out by Friday," he said. "But don't worry, it'll get done."

And that goes to show you how important—and profitable—toys have become in the comic book industry. McFarlane wasn't the only big name taking time out from his busy schedule to make the P.R. rounds at Toy Fair in New York City in early February. Rob Liefeld was hyping his Youngblood license which he recently moved from McFarlane Toys to the upstart company Trendmasters. Spokesmodels like Spider-Man and Wolverine decorated the Toy Biz showroom. And they were just part of the over 1,600 exhibitors at the show.

Taking place every year in early February, the eight-day Toy Fair is the mecca where every major toy manufacturer unleashes all its new toys for the press and toy store owners (i.e., Toys R Us, Kay-Bee Toy and Hobby) to take a gander. And it doesn't end at just toys. Need a Halloween styrofoam pumpkin? Or an artificial Christmas tree? You'll find dozens of companies trying to sell you on them. And if not you, then owners of chain stores that're interested in selling their products.

And they do sell. The toy industry in 1994 alone took in a benchmark $18.7 billion dollars, 33.9 percent of which came from male action toys (i.e., action figures, accessories and roleplaying games). Early stats show 1995's total sales are expected to outdo even that.

One of the highlights of the show was a limited edition of McFarlane Toys' Cornboy; a limited edition of exactly one. A homemade figure in real packaging, Cornboy is a goofy depiction of a local pizza delivery boy near McFarlane's office. The figure, which hung on the showroom wall with all the other Spawn figures, wasn't for sale, but was funny to see.

Other news has Toy Biz discontinuing its Fantastic Four line with its latest releases, while debuting its cool Hulk line. A big downer was that the Tick line is being discontinued by Bandai, for the reason stated that the "Tick" TV cartoon appealed to an older audience.

For a sneak peek at some of the neat things heading to a store near you, read on!

BY DAN ALBAUGH, BUDDY SCALERA AND BRIAN CUNNINGHAM

PRESS

X-MEN

X-MEN LIGHT-UP (LEFT TO RIGHT): GAMBIT II, PSYLOCKE, JUGGERNAUT II, STEALTH WOLVERINE AND NIGHTCRAWLER II

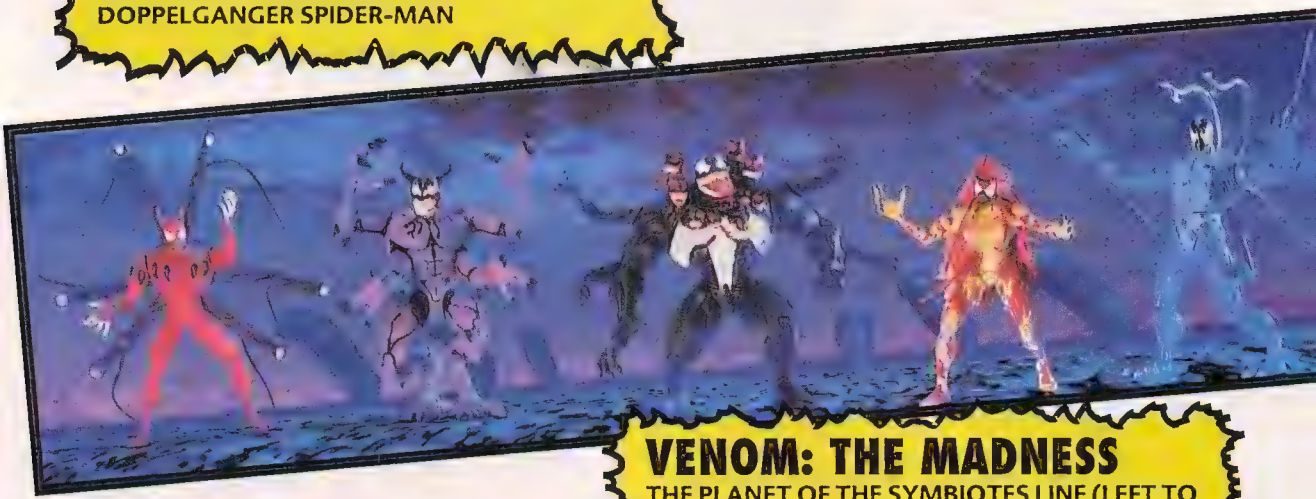
TOY BIZ

GENERATION X

GENERATION X (LEFT TO RIGHT): ORPHAN MAKER, WHITE QUEEN, BANSHEE II, MARROW AND MONDO

SPIDER-MAN

SPIDER-MAN: CYBER WAR LINE (LEFT TO RIGHT): CYBORG SPIDER-MAN, HYDRO-MAN, DR. STRANGE, BLACK CAT AND DOPPELGANGER SPIDER-MAN



VENOM: THE MADNESS

THE PLANET OF THE SYMBIOTES LINE (LEFT TO RIGHT): HYBRID, RIOT, VENOM, SCREAM AND LASHER

SPIDER-MAN

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN LINE (LEFT TO RIGHT): SPIDER-MAN 2099, TRANSLUCENT VENOM, SPIDER-WOMAN II, RHINO II AND BEN REILLY SPIDER-MAN

HULK

THE INCREDIBLE HULK LINE (LEFT TO RIGHT): MR. FIXIT, SHE-HULK, BRUCE BANNER/ SAVAGE HULK (THE TWO COME TOGETHER—YOU CAN ACTUALLY FIT BANNER INTO THE LARGER HULK FIGURE!), THE LEADER AND ABOMINATION

ARACHNOPHOBIA

THIS LINE COMBINES SPIDEY WITH HIS VILLAINS. (LEFT TO RIGHT): VAMPIDER (SPIDEY/MORBIUS), SPIDER-GOBLIN (SPIDEY/GREEN GOBLIN) AND MAN-LIZARD (SPIDEY/LIZARD).

WISH LIST

THE 10 ACTION FIGURES THAT WIZARD WANTS TO SEE MADE

(AND SOON!)

1) **Captain America (Marvel Heroes)**—Dethroning Havok as the character that has just got to be made into an action figure is Captain America, one of the cornerstone characters of the Marvel Universe. His toy gimmick? Why, a keen shield-slingin' arm, of course!

2) **Havok (X-Men)**—In his original black suit with light-up energy rings on his chest.

3) **Bizarro (Superman)**—With authentic "Me have to use toilet!" snarl and removable Clark Kent-ish glasses, tie & tattered jacket.

4) **Sandman (Spider-Man)**—They're making a Hydro-Man before a Sandman? Sheesh. Anyhoo, Sandy would have detachable sand-shape hands and sandpile body just like the Iceman II's snap-ons.

5) **Snowtrooper (Star Wars)**—With stylin' butt-only mini-skirt and one o' them neat tri-pod cannons.

6) **Wendigo (Hulk)**—Big, muscular and NO "real" fur (it never ends up looking good), with assorted bones and skulls. Like the Savage Hulk figure, he should come with a scrawny human that fits inside, so you can "cure" the curse of the Wendigo.

7) **High Evolutionary (Hulk)**—As big as Toy Biz's Galactus, complete with a "de-evolutionized" cro-magnon Hulk.

8) **Azrael (Batman)**—With pop-out blade and snap-on gauntlet flames just like, you guessed it, the second Iceman.

9) **Lobo (DC Heroes)**—Ready to beat up other action figures with his light-up eyes, hooked chain and "fart-when-you-squeeze-'im" rubber bulldog.

10) **Gorn (Classic Star Trek)**—Complete with non-poseable jaw (just like the show), easy-to-escape net and a fairly harmless plastic rock (again, just like the show).

Hey, wanna add your two cents to the list? Tell us what figures you wanna see made (along with some neat trinket/action they perform) by posting your comments in the "Wizard World" bulletin board on America Online (hit Keyword: Wizard, and look under "Toy Wish List"). Or just e-mail us at WizardTGTC@aol.com.

McFARLANE TOYS

NOTE THAT THE DETAIL IN THIS 13-INCH ANGELA FIGURE IS FAR MORE DETAILED THAN THE 6-INCHER

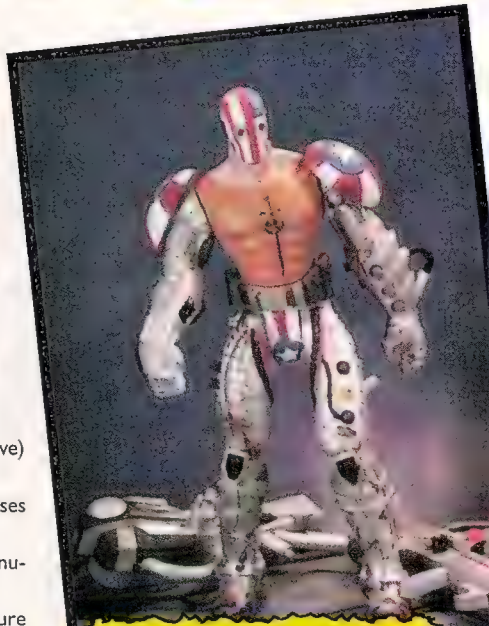
OVERTKILL II (JULY)

WILDSTORM (JULY)

VANDALIZER (DUE OUT IN JULY)

GRAIL II (MAY)

FRANKENSTEIN (MAY)



SUPERPATRIOT (AUGUST)

SPAWN

Coming in May are the new WetWorks figures. Along with Grail II and Frankenstein (shown above) are Pilgrim, Dozer II, Commander Dane and Blood Queen.

Other figures due out in July are Viking Spawn, Nuclear Spawn and Tremor II. August releases also include Tiffany, The Freak, Sansker, Battleclad Spawn and Alien Spawn.

New 13-inch figures are due starting in June with Spawn and Medieval Spawn, and continuing in December with Angela and Violator.

McFarlane is also releasing a non-Spawn line called Total Chaos, which is said to feature characters and designs McFarlane couldn't fit into his *Spawn* comic. The line, due out in September, mixes medieval knights with cybernetic technology; it includes characters named Al Simmons (you don't think...?), Hoof, Widow Maker, Gore, Thorax and Dragon Blade.

KENNER

STAR WARS

This summer's Star Wars figures, based on the novel *Shadows of the Empire,* include Chewbacca in Snoova Disguise, Luke Skywalker in Coruscant Guard Uniform, Dash Rendar, Xizor, Xizor vs. Darth Vader two-pack, and Boba Fett vs. IG-88 two-pack. Vehicles include Swoop vehicle with Swoop Trooper, Dash Rendar's Outrider and Boba Fett's Slave I.

A new Batman line called Batman: Total Justice comes out beginning this spring. The line has six big-name figures: Aquaman, the Flash, Green Lantern, Darkseid, Batman and Robin.

Kenner is also debuting its Superman: The Animated Series line in the fall. Among the assortment are Brainiac, Darkseid, Lex Luthor, Capture Net Superman, Krypton Shield Superman, Deep Dive Superman, Neutron Superman, Quick Change Superman and Solar Energy Superman.

Kenner is continuing its Superman: Man of Steel line this spring with Lex Luthor, Metallo, a Superboy vs. King Shark two-pack and a variety of different looking Superman figures. A cool accessory is Superman's Kryptonian Battlesuit.

PLAYMATES

STAR TREK: VOYAGER
ST:TNG STARFLEET ACADEMY

MATTEL

BARBIE–STAR TREK EDITION

THINKWAY

TOY STORY

Other Toy Story figures due out this summer and fall: Boxer Buzz, Collapsible Woody, Fighter Woody, Infrared Buzz, Solar Ranger Buzz and Super Sonic Buzz

STAR WARS: SHADOW OF THE EMPIRE (LEFT TO RIGHT): SWOOP WITH FIGURE, CHEWBACCA IN SNOOVA DISGUISE, LUKE SKYWALKER IN CORUSCANT GUARD UNIFORM AND IG-88

STAR TREK: VOYAGER, UPPER TIER (LEFT TO RIGHT): LT. TOM PARIS, THE DOCTOR, CAPT. JANEWAY AND VIIDIAN. SECOND TIER: COMM. CHAKOTAY, LT. TORRES, KES AND LT. CAREY. THIRD TIER: NEELIX, TUVOK, LT. SESKA AND CHAKOTAY AS A MAQUIS. LOWER TIER: ENSIGN HARRY KIM, LT. TORRES AS A KLINGON AND KAZON.

BUZZ LIGHTYEAR'S SPACE SHIP

STARFLEET ACADEMY DUE OUT THIS SUMMER (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP): PICARD, WORF AND RIKER

BABY FACE

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This collection features the work of several fan-favorite artists and a preview of the upcoming Warrior Nun / Razor crossover! Our edition has an exclusive new virgin cover by Ben Dunn. Limited to 2000. Regular edition $5, signed edition autographed by Ben Dunn available for $15.

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The SPAWN® "HOMEMADE HERO" CONTEST

Hey! Didja read the feature on how to make your own "Homemade Hero" in this ish? Just itchin' to give it a try? Wanna win a bunch of cool stuff while you're at it? Well, here's your chance!

How to Play

First, read the how-to article on "Homemade Heroes." Then grab some implements of destruction and get to work. We want you to make a "Homemade Hero" of any Spawn-related character. The only rule: no fair starting with a McFarlane Toys toy. You do that, you're disqualified. Game misconduct. Grab some pine.

Do up a Spawn. Or possibly a Medieval Spawn, a Violator or an Angela, or possibly even a Terry Fitzgerald. Just make sure it's a character in the Spawn family. Take a picture of it (no Polaroids, please, and remember that focus is your friend) and send it to us. The top "Homemade Heroes" will win some keen stuff!

PRIZES

Grand Prize (1): One talented reader will receive one big slew of McFarlane Toys, as chosen by McFarlane Toys. Tons of figures, from Commando Spawn to Cosmic Angela! And that's not even all—two toys of the winner's choice will even be autographed by comic artist, toy designer and softball player *par excellence* Todd McFarlane.

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No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Todd McFarlane Productions and their immediate families or The Hansons. The Hansons! Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card and attach the form or card to your photo. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: Spawn "Homemade Hero" Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. You know—house keys, car keys. Keys to the camper? **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by May 31, 1996.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected based on quality and creativity among all properly completed entries by Wizard Press. Judging will take place on June 17, 1996.

For a list of winners, available after June 17, 1996, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Spawn "Homemade Hero" Winners, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Fill this sucker out, attach it to your photo (Focus! FOCUS!!), put it in an envelope and send it all to: Spawn "Homemade Hero" Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Deadline is May 31, 1996—so start yer homemaking!

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So, if ya win, which two toys ya want signed?

Greg Capullo's

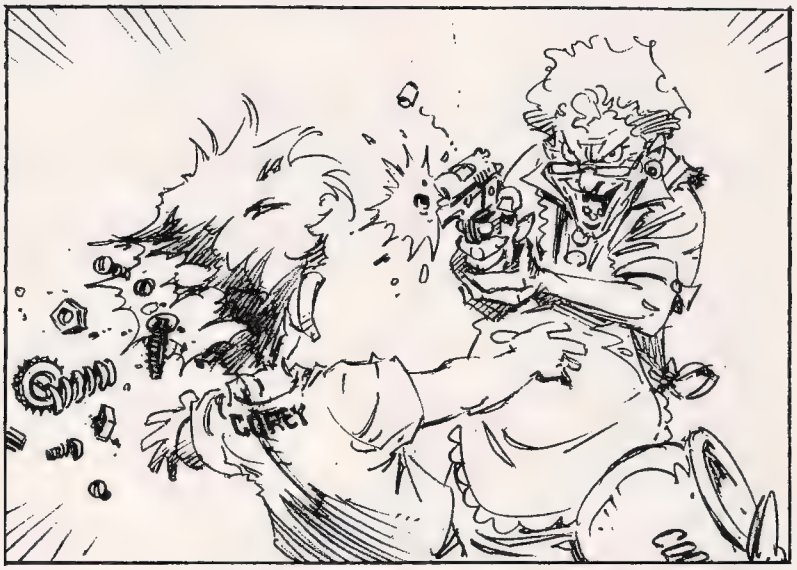
KRASH COURSE

STORYTELLING AND PACING, PART 2

All right! Everybody ready for part two of our lesson? Super. If you recall last month's lesson, I explained **pacing** as being the rate of speed at which you give the reader visual information. You may also recall how different **storytelling** approaches can be used to make the reader "feel" a certain way. **Pacing** also has this ability. I've drawn up a few examples as a demonstration we can talk about. So let's get started!

1. mmm...cookies

This first example is extremely fast-paced. Almost immediately following the set-up shot (Granny with the cookie jar), we get the climax of ol' Corey getting capped. No indication was given that Granny would pull a gun instead of a cookie. So without any tension building, the payoff (Corey's mechanical head getting blown off) has a jarring effect on the reader. The reader was unable to prepare himself, so he gets shocked! The exact opposite approach is used in the following example.

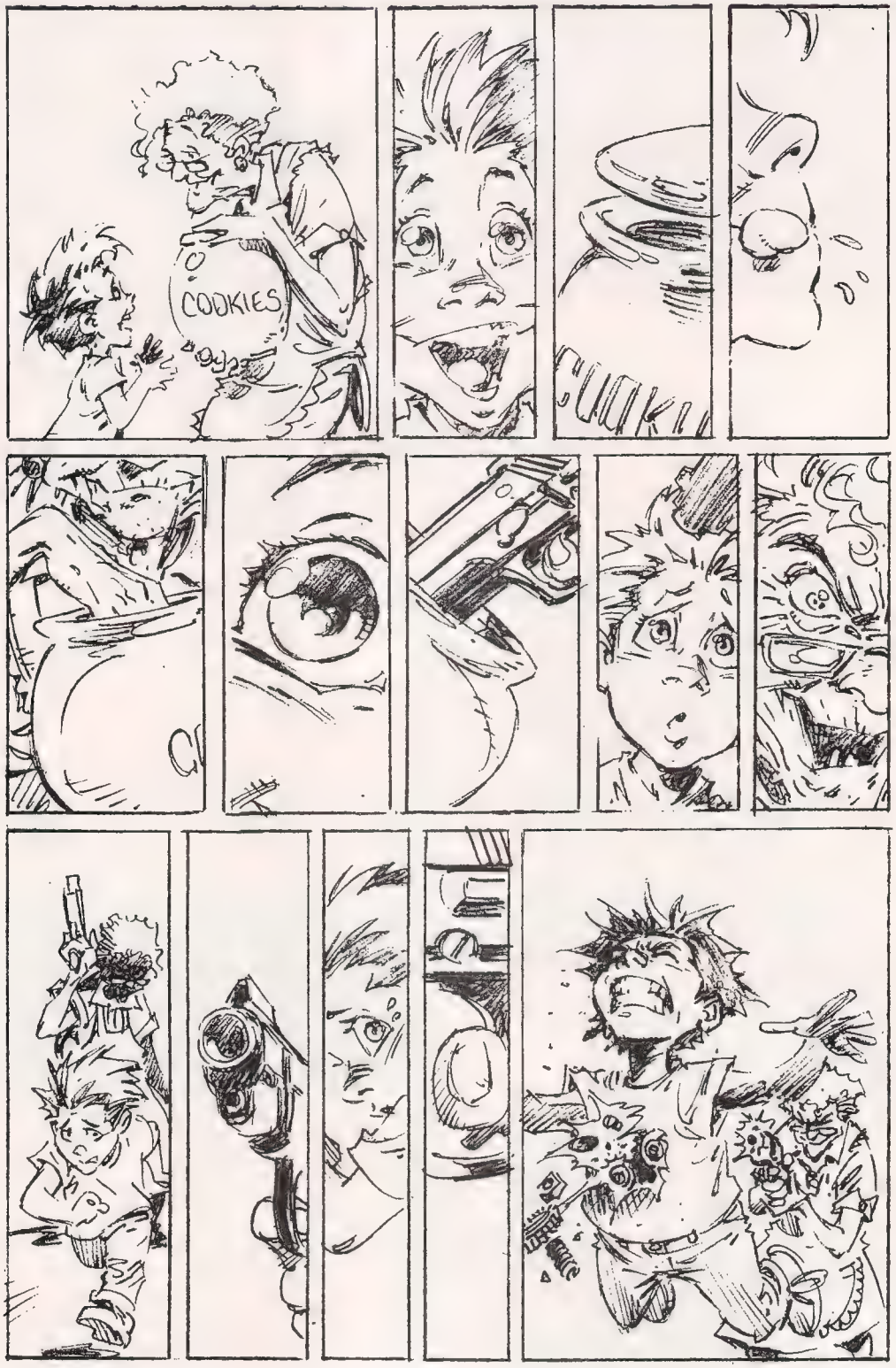


KRASH COURSE and related text ™ & © Greg Capullo

2. you want one?

Here, a much slower pace is used to reach the payoff. Taking our time, we build tension our reader will feel. First, we spend some time demonstrating Corey's growing anticipation of getting his cookie. Midway through the page we introduce the gun and begin showing Corey's growing anticipation change to mounting fear. By intercutting Corey's fearful reaction with the danger of Granny's gun, we manage to make our reader nervous. Why? Because this time, the reader knows exactly what is about to happen and is powerless to stop it. A quick side note: Notice how even the panels seem to tense up as the climax approaches. They become skinnier and skinnier, like a rubberband being pulled taut, until...twang! We then open it up for the payoff. Once again, panel format (i.e., its shape and presentation, which we covered last month) has worked for you to convey a certain feeling.

This example is a bit extreme in its pacing, while the next example is more middle-of-the-road.

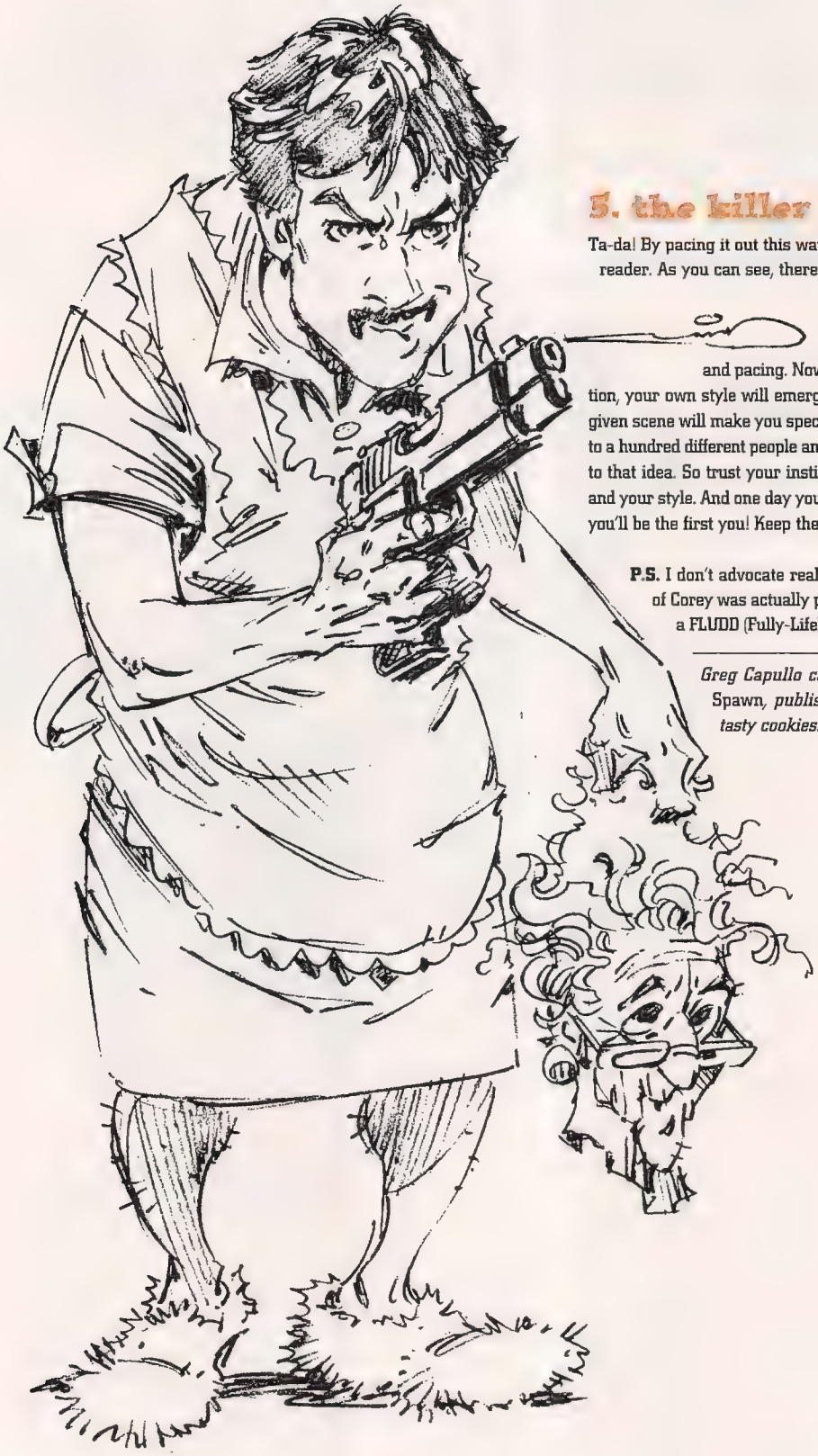


3. can't run from granny

We still have some build-up, but the payoff comes a little quicker. It's totally up to your discretion. Some themes would be totally ridiculous with a slow build-up, while others couldn't work without it. You'll be the guy in control of it. So your style and flair for storytelling and pacing will be unique to you. Sometimes you may want to pace something in such a way that the reader doesn't guess the payoff till he turns the page. (It's kinda pointless to do it this way if the reader already suspects what the outcome will be, as in our previous examples.) But let's continue our little story with Corey, as I demonstrate what I mean.

4. who is this chick?

As the scene continues, we see Granny's motivation for killing little Corey. (Justifiable homicide, if you ask me!) The page ends with a shot that is a little puzzling to us. This sets us up for the turn-the-page payoff shot. .



5. the killer revealed!

Ta-da! By pacing it out this way, we again spring a surprise on the reader. As you can see, there's not much mystery involved here.

You now have some solid, basic guidelines concerning storytelling and pacing. Now through practice and experimentation, your own style will emerge. Your ideas of how to present any given scene will make you special. You can give the same story idea to a hundred different people and get a hundred different approaches to that idea. So trust your instincts, and use both your imagination and your style. And one day you won't become the next whoever, but you'll be the first you! Keep the lead burnin', tough guys!

P.S. I don't advocate real-life violence on any level. The part of Corey was actually played by a synthetic robot known as a FLUDD (Fully-Lifelike-Ultra-Destructible-Droid). **W**

Greg Capullo can be seen every month penciling Spawn, *published by Image Comics, and baking tasty cookies.*

TRAILER PARK

Wizard's column about Hollywood and TV and stuff like that

'BATMAN' Roles Up in the Air

By Rob Allstetter

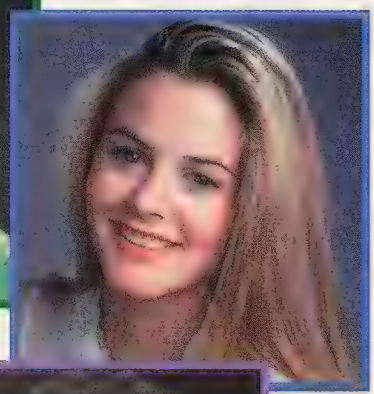
George Clooney as Batman? Arnold Schwarzenegger as Mr. Freeze? Uma Thurman as Poison Ivy?

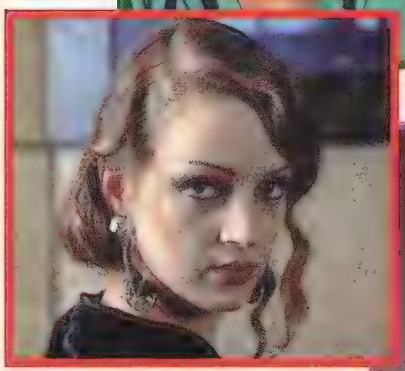
At press time, speculation was wild over the casting for "Batman and Robin," the fourth movie in the live-action series. Although Warner Bros. had no comment on any of the roles, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Clooney, the star of NBC's top-rated series "ER," was in final negotiations to take over the roles of Bruce Wayne and Batman from Val Kilmer. He was noted as having signed a three-picture deal with Warner Bros., which might include the Batman film. Warner Bros. had planned on using Kilmer in more than one movie when he followed Michael Keaton in the cape and cowl, but Kilmer will reportedly instead have the title role in "The Saint," a film which is based on the old Roger Moore television series and co-stars Elisabeth Shue. However, further reports say Kilmer is apparently not out of the running for the Bat-role.

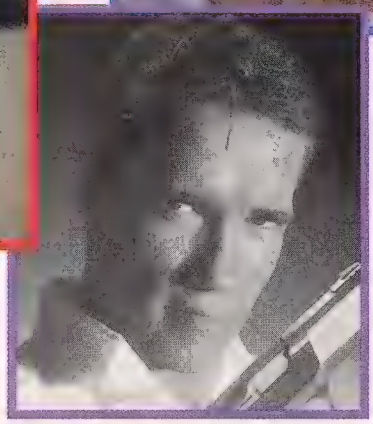
Clooney, who earlier passed up the lead role in Universal's "The Green Hornet," might have scheduling conflicts if he gets the part. "Batman and Robin" is scheduled to start filming in September, when "ER"—which is also from Warner Bros.—would be in production.

Speculation about Schwarzenegger playing Mr. Freeze heated up when "Batman and Robin" director Joel Schumacher reportedly visited him on the set of his new film, "Eraser."

Thurman has emerged as the leading candidate for Poison Ivy, but has denied the role is hers. Appearing on ABC's "Good Morning America" on Feb. 8, Thurman was asked more than once if she had or would be getting the role. Her answers were "it would be premature to say," "not quite," "it could be true" and "perhaps."







IS THIS THE POSSIBLE CAST OF THE NEW BATMAN FLICK? CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: GEORGE CLOONEY AS BATMAN, ALICIA SILVERSTONE AS BATGIRL, ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER AS MR. FREEZE AND UMA THURMAN AS POISON IVY.

It appears safe to say that Chris O'Donnell will be back as Robin, Michael Gough will return as Alfred and Alicia Silverstone will be playing Batgirl. According to the *Los Angeles Times* Syndicate, this Batgirl will not be the daughter of Commissioner Gordon; the thinking is that Silverstone is too young to be the daughter of Pat Hingle, who has played Gordon in the first three films and appears to be on board for the fourth.

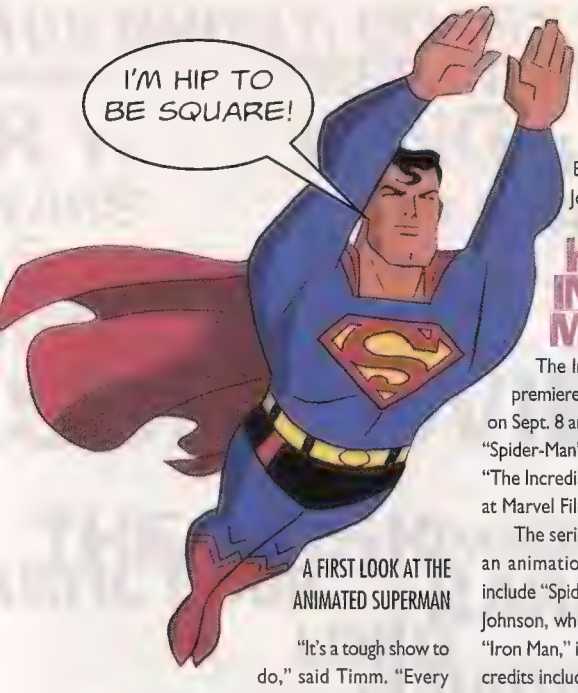
Meanwhile, last summer's "Batman Forever" has been nominated for Academy Awards in the cinematography, sound and sound effects editing categories. The awards will be presented on March 25.

SUPERMAN ANIMATION NEWS

If you liked the Batman animated series—and who didn't?—you should like the upcoming Superman series.

Bruce Timm, Alan Burnett and Paul Dini, producers on "The Adventures of Batman and Robin," are all back to guide 65 episodes of "Superman" for the Warner Bros. network and its Kids WB. 13 episodes are scheduled for the first season. The first three episodes will combine into a movie that will be shown in prime time in late August, and the series will assume its regular time slot of Saturday at 10 a.m. (ET) beginning in September.

George Clooney, Alicia Silverstone, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Uma Thurman photos by Everett Collection



A FIRST LOOK AT THE ANIMATED SUPERMAN

"It's a tough show to do," said Timm. "Every aspect of the show has been tougher than Batman."

"Writing-wise, it's harder because you've got a lot more regular characters than Batman, and, to a degree, that's what longtime Superman fans want to see," said Dini. "They want to see Jimmy and Lois and Clark and Perry and all the rest of the *Daily Planet* staff."

Most of the familiar supporting characters who appear in the comics—from Bibbo to Maggie Sawyer—will be on the show, and there will be a few characters and villains created specifically for television.

Dini and Timm described their Clark Kent as more of a hard-boiled crime reporter than in his other recent TV/movie incarnations. "We're playing him as much less of a boy scout than he's ever been portrayed before," Timm said.

Tim Daly from the NBC sitcom "Wings" does the voices of Clark/Superman. Dana Delany, who did the voice of Bruce Wayne's long-lost love in "Batman: Mask of the Phantasm," provides the voice of Lois.

And, unlike the comics (until recently, anyway) and the live-action "Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman" show, there will not be a romantic relationship between Clark and Lois.

"They're like a brother and sister who don't get along," said Timm. "Lois definitely sees Clark as a threat. She's a hotshot reporter at the *Planet*, and here comes this guy who starts scooping her on all these stories, especially involving Superman. She can't figure out how he does it. It's a competitive relationship."

Villains include Brainiac (rewritten in the origin story with Kryptonian ties), Parasite, Lex Luthor, Darkseid and Metallo. Lobo appears in a two-parter in the first season, and eventually look for Supergirl, the New Gods and, yes, Batman.

A few more Super-facts: Clark does not have the long hair he has in the comics. Timm described Metropolis as "the flip side of Gotham City," bright and optimistic with an "ocean-liner deco" look.

Writers include Hillary Bader, Evan Dorkin, Stan Berkowitz and Joe Lansdale.

HULK FIRST IN MARVEL MEDIA RACE

The Incredible Hulk animated series will premiere on the United Paramount Network on Sept. 8 and will air on Sunday mornings. Like "Spider-Man" and the "Marvel Action Universe," "The Incredible Hulk" will be produced in-house at Marvel Films.

The series will be produced by Dick Sebast, an animation veteran whose recent credits include "Spider-Man" and "Fantastic Four." Greg Johnson, who worked on the second season of "Iron Man," is story editor. Bob Forward, whose credits include "WildC.A.T.s," is writing the first six episodes, including a two-part origin story.

"Brainy Banner" fans should note that the latest television version of the Hulk will be the classic savage Hulk from the comics. The Leader will be the primary villain, with several other longtime foes appearing. Sources told *Wizard* the series will be "dark and mood-oriented," with a focus on gamma-created beings.

In other Marvel news, the movie rights to Spider-Man were not among French company Canal Plus' buyout of bankrupt Carolco Pictures. The rights were expected to be auctioned off at a bankruptcy sale in March, with many studios showing interest.... Although sources say it could happen soon, a director for the X-Men live-action movie has not been signed yet. It is extremely doubtful the movie will be in theaters by Christmas, as originally hoped by 20th Century Fox....Fox Family Films has officially announced its intentions for a Silver Surfer film. Creative personnel should be revealed soon....Reruns of the Fantastic Four and Iron Man animated series will likely find a non-syndicated home this fall, but there will be no new episodes made this year....Marvel Publisher Stan Lee is helping New World Entertainment develop a TV-movie pilot called "I, Werewolf" for CBS.

SCUD: THE MOVIE!

Cinergi Pictures Entertainment has purchased the movie rights to *Scud: The Disposable Assassin*, the comic from Fireman Press. The book (about a disposable killer robot who's aware of his mortality and doesn't want to be destroyed after completing his mission) was brought to Cinergi—which also developed "Judge Dredd"—by Oliver Stone's production entities Illusion and Ixtlan. Stone will likely serve as an executive producer.

Scud creator Rob Schrab and Fireman Press President Peter Alberts will serve as producers and creative consultants. Schrab and Dan Harmon have written a screenplay based on previous comic book stories. Alberts said that the screenplay will likely be refined by Alan McElroy, who wrote the upcoming Spawn film and is the scribe on the Razor film (see Short Takes).

"It could be a mixture of live action, animation, computer animation and claymation," said Alberts. "Stone wants to do something really different with this."

PHANTOM GETS A DATE

The Phantom figures to have more than a ghost of a chance at the box office this summer. Tentatively scheduled to be in theaters around June, the live-action movie, based on Lee Falk's long-running comic-strip character, has a budget of nearly $45 million and is one of Paramount Pictures' big releases of 1996.

Billy Zane stars as Kit Walker, the latest to assume the Phantom mantle, which has been handed down from father to son ever since the founder of the line witnessed his father being murdered by pirates 400 years ago.

Australia's Simon Wincer is directing. His film credits include "Free Willy" and "Operation Dumbo Drop." He also directed the television mini-series "Lonesome Dove" and six episodes of "The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles."

Kristy Swanson ("Buffy the Vampire Slayer") stars as the love interest, and Treat Williams ("The Late Shift") is the villain. The cast also includes Patrick McGoohan ("The Prisoner"), Catherina

SCUD IS BEING MADE INTO A MOVIE! THINK OF THE MERCHANDISING POSSIBILITIES!

Zeta-Jones, James Remar, Jon Tenney and Samantha Eggar. Jeffrey Boam wrote the script, and Robert Evans and Alan Ladd Jr. are producing.

Marlene Stewart, who worked on Madonna's tours, designed The Phantom's purple costume. Principal photography was scheduled to last some 90 days in Australia, Thailand and Los Angeles.

SHADOWHAWK SHOW FLIP-FLOPS (AGAIN)

Remember that ShadowHawk television series that originally was going to be an animated series and then turned into a live-action project? ShadowHawk creator Jim Valentino said the imminent version is now a cartoon again, likely to be produced by Nelvana to air this fall on the USA Network.

"We're written the pilot and have the bible done, and we're just waiting for the green light," said Valentino, who co-wrote the pilot with Sib Ventress. "This ShadowHawk will be Paul Johnstone and he won't have AIDS. There will be some changes from the comic, and we've rounded out the supporting cast. I don't think we're losing any integrity, though."

Valentino said Wesley Snipes, whose production company is still developing the live-action ShadowHawk, may do the voice of the character.

NEWS 'FLASH'!

Hearst Entertainment and Lacewood Productions are producing 26 episodes of a new Flash Gordon animated series for syndication beginning this fall. "It's an action/adventure high-quality cartoon incorporating 3-D," said producer Gerald Tripp, who has been working on the series since February 1995. "Our Flash Gordon is a young California hero who is trapped on the planet Mongo with Dale Arden and a slightly wingy Professor Zarkov."

Ming is the lizard emperor of Mongo and has a daughter who is a half-lizard. Flash leads the rebellion against Ming.

"The planet is made up of weird ecosystems peopled by these different groups of mutants—vine people, shark people, cave dwellers," said Tripp. "We're making use of the otherworldly design and color."

Toronto actor Toby Procter does the voice of Flash, and the voice of Professor Zarkov belongs to Paul Shaffer, the band director for "The Late Show with David Letterman."

Norman LeBlanc is directing, and the husband-and-wife team of Garfield and Judith Reeves-Stevens ("Phantom 2040," "Star Trek" books) is story editing.

NEW DREAM FOR GRAZIANOS

Animation veterans Stephanie and Jim Graziano, whose Graz Entertainment produced the hit Fox animated series "X-Men" and "The Tick," have closed shop to become executives in the animation division of SKG DreamWorks, the new entertainment company run by Steven Spielberg, David Geffen and Jeffrey Katzenberg.

"We'll be working on television animation for series, both once a week and strip [weekdays], as well as specials, direct-to-video and some theatricals," said Stephanie Graziano, who added it's too early to announce specific projects. "We're in our first cycle of internal development and we're actively taking pitches from the outside."

Also on board at DreamWorks are Will Meugniot (producer for "X-Men," "Exo-Squad" and "Street Fighter") and Michael Reaves (writer and story editor for both Batman animated series and "Gargoyles").

The final episodes of "X-Men" are being produced directly at Saban Entertainment, and Graziano said she is helping Sunbow Productions set up an office to produce "The Tick."

Graz was a partner with Marc Silvestri in the development of an animated CyberForce show for Fox, with Meugniot producing. "I'll probably continue to be an executive producer on that and oversee the animation wherever we place it," Graziano said.

Graz was not a partner in the proposed Youngblood animated series; it's being handled by a production house, and it's unclear where that project will wind up.

FALL LINEUPS

Each of the major networks has unveiled its Saturday morning lineups for this fall. While NBC apparently only has live-action teen shows planned, here's the scoop on the standout shows you can expect to see on the other networks (all times are Eastern; all shows are animated unless otherwise noted):

FOX

Saturday lineup:

• "Casper," 9 a.m.: Introduced in February; based on the Harvey Comics character's movie adventures.

• "Goosebumps," 10 a.m.: Live-action show based on R.L. Stine's books; moving to Saturdays.

• "Spider-Man," 10:30 a.m.: Spidey gets a new time period for his third season, which fits under the story umbrella "Sins of the Fathers." Look for Doctor Strange, Carnage and Daredevil.

• "X-Men," 11 a.m.: In its fifth season, the show returns to its old time period. Episodes beyond the original 70-episode order are being produced at Saban Entertainment.

• "The Tick," 11:30 a.m.: Ben Edlund's big blue guy scores a new, choice time spot for his third season.

"BEHOLD, ARTHUR! WE ARE TO RETURN TO FOX-TV FOR A THIRD SEASON! ISN'T THIS EXCITING?" "I GUESS..."

Weekday lineup:

• "Where on Earth is Carmen Sandiego?," 8 a.m.: The Emmy-winning series moves to weekdays.

• "The Adventures of Batman and Robin," 3:30 p.m.: A new time period, but the same 85 episodes.

• "Power Rangers Zeo," 4 p.m.: Live-action; the Rangers get a new name in April, based on the Zeo gem which gives them new powers.

ABC

• "The Mighty Ducks," 9 a.m.: From Disney, starring six crime-fighting ducks from an alien planet.

• "Gargoyles: The Goliath Chronicles" (working title), 9:30 a.m.: Goliath and his clan move to network television with all-new episodes.

• "Hypernauts," 10 a.m.: Live-action show which began March 3; features three space cadets.

• Canceled: "Tales from the Cryptkeeper" and "Reboot."

CBS

• "Felix the Cat," 8:30 a.m.: New episodes from Film Roman for a second season.

• "The Mask," 9 a.m.: New episodes and new time slot for Dark Horse's popular hero; "The Mask" will also be syndicated weekdays.

• "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective," 10 a.m.: One Jim Carrey character replaces another (The Mask) in this time spot for a second season.

• "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles," 10:30 a.m.: Seventh season; more new episodes from Fred Wolf Films. Carter, the teenager introduced this past season, will be featured.

The Tick art courtesy of Fox-TV

WB

Kids WB's Saturday morning lineup includes: "Animaniacs" at 9; "Pinky & The Brain" at 9:30; "Superman" at 10 (see story above); and "Earthworm Jim" at 11:30.

UPN

UPN has dropped "Space Strikers" and "Tekno-Man" from its Sunday morning lineup. New shows will include "The Incredible Hulk" from Marvel.

SHORT TAKES

Brent Spiner (Data) has joined the cast of the next "Star Trek" movie, filling out the "Next Generation" lineup. **Jonathan Frakes** (Commander Riker), who has directed more than 20 "Star Trek" TV episodes, will likely also direct the film, which is due around Thanksgiving. It will not be called **"Star Trek: Resurrection,"** as originally announced, because of a conflict with the title of the next Alien film (see below)....Ron Underwood ("City Slickers," "Speechless") will direct **"The Green Hornet"** for Universal Pictures. **Jason Scott Lee**, who starred in "The Bruce Lee Story," is lined up for Kato, and, after George Clooney bowed out of it, **Greg Kinnear** ("Sabrina") has been linked to the lead role. The script, by Rich Wilkes, is being fine-tuned....Dark Horse's hard-hitting heroine **Barb Wire** finally rides into theaters on May 3....Comic book writer **Mark Verheiden** is writing two films: "Al & Gene," a special effects comedy to be produced by Larry Gordon and Dark Horse's Mike Richardson; and "Outlaw," an action thriller produced by Don Murphy and Jane Hamsher for 20th Century Fox....The cast of **"Mars Attacks!,"** a live-action film based on the popular Topps cards to be directed by **Tim Burton**, will include **Pierce Brosnan** and **Sarah Jessica Parker**. *Daily Variety* reports that **Jack Nicholson**, who worked with Burton on "Batman," may also join the cast....Scottish director Danny Boyle has stepped down as director of **"Alien Resurrection."** He reportedly would have received $850,000 to helm the fourth Alien movie. Filming is scheduled to be in England this summer for a spring 1997 release....Eric Roberts has joined the cast of Fox's **Doctor Who** television movie, which is in production in Vancouver. Paul McGann's in the lead role....George Lucas' punched-up version of **"Star Wars"** will be released in theaters—most likely next February—to celebrate the film's 20th anniversary. *Daily Variety* reports that Lucas may also rework **"The Empire Strikes Back"** and **"Return of the Jedi."** The next brand-new "Star Wars" film, directed by Lucas himself, could be in theaters by 1998....The Feb. 11 episode of "**Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman**" (entitled "I Now Pronounce You..."), which featured the wedding of Clark to a clone of Lois, was a ratings success, tying for 19th overall for the week in the Nielsen ratings. The episode was dedicated to Superman co-creator **Jerry Siegel**, who died in January....Fox Family Films is planning a live-action movie based on King Features' **Beetle Bailey** comic strip....**Geena Davis** and **Renny Harlin**, the husband-and-wife team who co-produced "Speechless," have signed on with **Jeff Most** ("The Crow") as producers of the **Razor** film, starring London Night Studios' popular anti-heroine. Harlin, who directed "Cliffhanger" and "Die Hard II," may direct the film, which is currently being shopped around to studios....Look for a live-action **Sabrina** TV-movie on Showtime April 7, featuring Archie Comics' teenage witch and starring Melissa Joan Hart (Nickelodeon's "Clarissa Explains it All"). According to *The Hollywood Reporter*, it will be spun off into a weekly ABC series....**Linda Fiorentino** ("The Last Seduction," "Unforgettable") was in final negotiations to join the cast of "Men in Black," a live-action film based on the Malibu characters. She would headline with **Tommy Lee Jones** and **Will Smith**. **W**

Rob Allstetter is currently in a fierce battle with Tom Hanks for the role of Bane.

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a look at some cool stuff with an alternative twist

I Dream of Comics

"I'm sitting in a room, and in one hand I'm holding one of the home-made comics I made when I was a little kid, and in the other I'm holding my dream diary," Rick Veitch explains in an even, measured tone as he carefully recounts a dream he had when he was 22. "I'm trying to put the two together, but they keep smashing; they won't go together. A voice comes from the ceiling and says, 'They don't fit, do they?' I say to the voice, 'I know who you are; you're my grandmother and I love you,' but the voice says, 'No, I'm not.' "

Veitch's voice grows more intense as he continues: "I'm getting frustrated because the comic and the dream diary won't fit together, and I'm yelling louder and louder, 'Yes, you are!' but the voice keeps saying 'No, I'm not.' Finally, I'm crying and screaming and suddenly the comic slips into the dream diary and clicks into place with a satisfying 'click.' Then the voice says, 'You're right, I am your grandmother.' "

This dream is one of many that the 44-year-old Vermont artist is using as source material for "Crypto Zoo," a story currently serialized in the monthly comic book *Rare Bit Fiends*. Veitch has gone back to some dream diaries he kept while in a state of severe depression as inspiration for this storyline. "Someone handed me a book on dreams when I was 22," he explains, "and I really started getting into it, and I began to write all my dreams down. It helped me climb out of the emotional hole I was in at the time. It's really clear when you sit down and read all these dreams how this whole problem was expressed in my dreams and how I healed myself as I worked my way through it."

Veitch is currently interested in following and illustrating his own dreams, but his earlier comic work centered around superheroes. He pioneered the revisionist superhero genre in 1985 with Epic's *The One* and later revitalized it with his examination of superhero sidekicks in *Bratpack* (1992) and his exploration of the superhero myth in *The Maximortal* (1992-93). He also grabbed comicdom's attention in 1989 by writing a story where a time-traveling Swamp Thing encountered Jesus Christ, but DC Comics refused to publish it, and Veitch left the monthly title.

By turning away from superheroes to focus on dreams, Veitch has learned quite a few things about human potential. "There are parts of us that know who and what we are going to be in the future, and the potential for what we can accomplish. By plugging in to your dreamwork on a regular level, you begin to get in touch with it."

Veitch stresses that the insight he has gained is not derived from a special talent or superhuman clairvoyance. Everyone has the potential to learn from their dreams, but society gets in the way of people who try to tap into this hidden power. "We've always looked down our noses at dreaming and seen it as a primitive form of being, but other civilizations, especially the aboriginal people, are very much in tune with it."

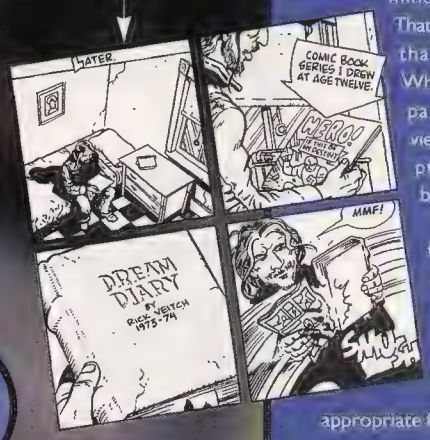
Veitch regularly displays this creative potential in *Rare Bit Fiends*. It originally started as a 24-hour comic that saw print as a back-up in *The Maximortal*, but Veitch refined the concept when he started the regular series in 1994. Reading an issue of *Rare Bit Fiends* is a unique experience that brings out a new relationship between creator and audience: You can actually watch someone else's dreams. By recording the unusual and symbolic details of dreams,

By recording his dreams in *Rare Bit Fiends*, Rick Veitch has found the best vehicle for his versatile, illustrative approach to comic art

Cover art from *Rare Bit Fiends #4*

by tom palmer jr.

Panel art depicting a dream Veitch had when he was 22 years old



Veitch has found the best vehicle for his versatile, illustrative approach to comic art. While the concept behind *Rare Bit Fiends* might sound dry and uninteresting at first, the comic is actually a joy to read. Where else can you see Neil Gaiman or Jeff Smith as characters in a comic book?

The creator is quick to acknowledge that there's a direct link between comics and dreams. "Comics operate with the same language that your brain is hardwired with. Even when we were apes in the trees, our minds worked with imagery. That's how dreams operate and that's how comics work. When you run the images in panel art for someone to view, it runs a lot of the same programs that are in our brains already."

It takes a lot of work for Veitch to get his dreams down to the comic book page. After taking copious notes every morning, Veitch must decide what is appropriate for his audience. Naturally, there are some things that never make it to an issue of *Rare Bit Fiends*. "There are certain things that I don't feel comfortable sharing with a huge audience. But at the same time, even when there's an idea that makes me feel uncomfortable, I like the challenge of getting it onto the page. It seems to be good therapy."

"Crypto Zoo," which began in *Rare Bit Fiends* #15, follows a younger Veitch's dreamlife, but earlier storylines in *Rare Bit Fiends* have chronicled Veitch's current life as a prominent alternative cartoonist and his troubles with self-publishing. Despite the hard work associated with self-publishing, Veitch is happy about the rewards. "If *Rare Bit Fiends* has proved anything, it's that a really distinctive personal vision can exist in a marketplace and actually make enough money where someone like me doesn't have to do mainstream comics all the time to live. That's a terrific place to be in. I can't tell you how many years I've wandered around hoping to get set up like this." W

Tom Palmer Jr. is a freelance writer from New Jersey who tried to keep a dream diary once, but he kept falling asleep while writing it.

FYI

You should be able to find *Rare Bit Fiends* at your local comic store, but if you have trouble, you can order directly from the publisher. Sample issues are $4 (which includes postage), and six-issue subscriptions are $24. Write to King Hell Press, PO Box 1371, West Townshend, VT 05359 for more information. *Rabid Eye*, a collection of the first eight issues (and "Understanding Rare Bit Fiends" from issue #12) is also available for $16.50 (including postage). Look for *Pocket Universe*, a collection of issues #9 through #11 and issues #13 and #14, this spring.

Roarin' Rick's Recommended Reading

Rick Veitch says: "I'm really encouraged by the growth in stores that do nothing but sell alternative and independent titles and ignore mainstream superhero books. There's a lot of good stuff happening in terms of the artform, and it's all there if you know how to scratch for it." Some of Rick's favorite comics are: *Cerebus, Tyrant, THB, Bone, Bizarre Heroes, Sandman, Love & Rockets, Jim, Acme Novelty Library, From Hell* and *Bacchus.*

Recommended Reading

The Very Vicky Junior Hepcat Funbook John Mitchell and Jana Christy, creators of *Very Vicky*, are celebrating their newborn twin boys, Harry and Hugo, with the publication of *The Very Vicky Junior Hepcat Funbook* (see right). The main attraction of this 80-page trade paperback is a pin-up section with work from Brian Michael Bendis, Steve Bissette, Evan Dorkin, Sarah Dyer, Batton Lash, Dave Sim, Rick and Cindy Veitch, and Michael Zulli. The rest of the book is a collection of Very Vicky short stories from various places, including her first appearance from the *Iconografix Special* in 1992. Look for the *Funbook* in April, retailing for $8.95, or write to Meet Danny Ocean at PO Box 383286, Cambridge, MA 02238 for more information. And all of you big enough to reach the bar without sitting on a phone book might also want to check out Joseph Lanza's *The Cocktail*, from St. Martin's Press. It's a comprehensive history of the cocktail in American history that features an appearance by Very Vicky and the Atomic Drinker. Look for *The Cocktail* in your local bookstore (it's a "real" book, not a comic book).

Death Rattle It's hard to say that the new *Death Rattle* series is strictly a horror anthology. The stories in this bimonthly comic are not the typical gross-out bloodfests associated with horror comics, but they are still unsettling and disturbing. Highlights from the first two issues include "The Probability Chamber," an EC comics-inspired story by Mark Schultz and Roger Petersen, "Cut-Up," an urban horror story by Brian Biggs, and chapters of "Alcoholic Janitor" by Zane Campbell. The third issue of *Death Rattle* is set for release in April. You should check your local comic store, or get a free catalog by contacting Kitchen Sink Press at 1-800-365-SINK or sending e-mail to kitchensp@aol.com.

by Carl Gustav Horn

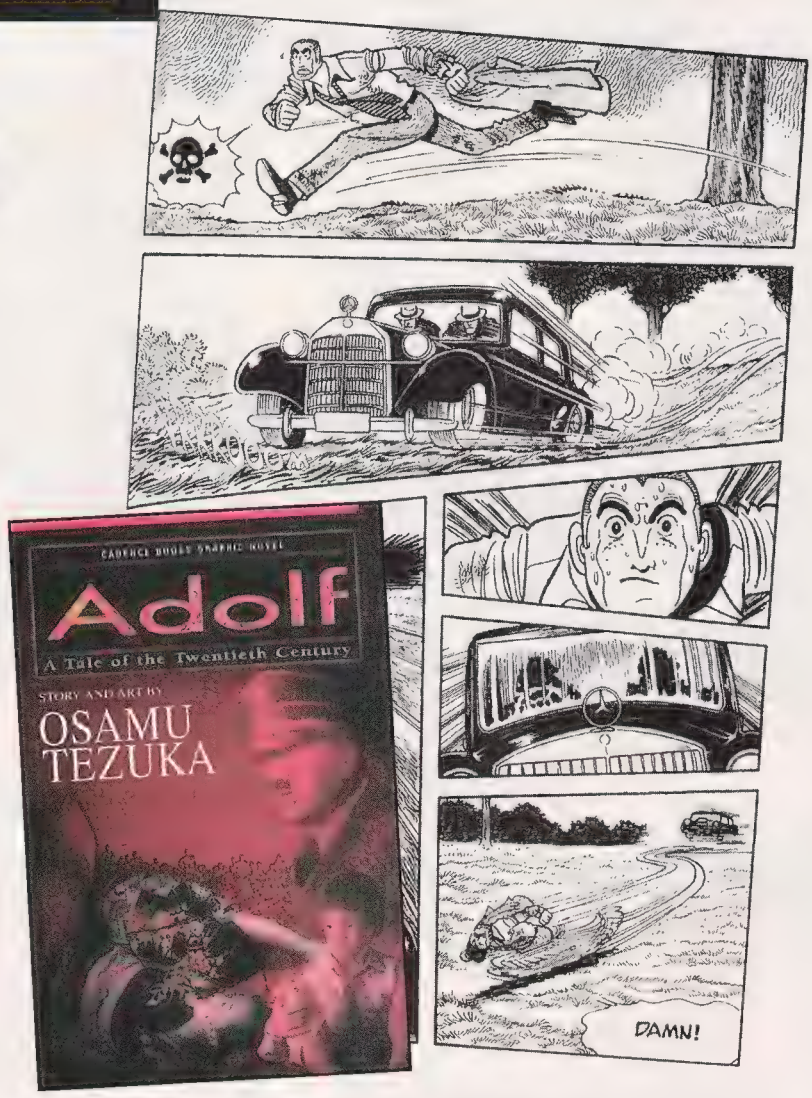
the god of manga

In a time when American comic companies are fighting to revitalize what is seen as a depressed industry and win back a shrinking audience, Japanese comics are thriving.

Japan is not only number one in world comic sales, but a country where almost forty percent of its national publishing output is devoted to manga. American companies must be wondering just how the Japanese can not only sell more comics than the Americans who invented them, but sell them to everyone, of all ages, in all subjects, all the time.

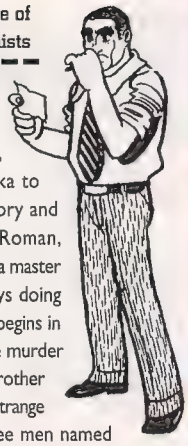
The answer, much like in a good thriller, lies with a dead man: Osamu Tezuka, who died on February 9, 1989. Only a month before, the Emperor Hirohito had died, yet the Japanese press coverage surrounding Tezuka's passing almost eclipsed that of the late emperor. And why not? The emperor was, after all, forced to renounce his official status as a god during the American occupation of Japan, but Tezuka died deified: every Japanese knew him as *manga no kamisama*, the "God of Comics." Japan's *Asahi* newspaper editorialized, "Foreign visitors to Japan often find it difficult to understand why...grown men and women are engrossed in comic magazines during commutes. One explanation for the popularity of comics in Japan is that Japan had Osamu Tezuka, whereas other nations did not. Without Osamu Tezuka, the postwar explosion in comics would have been inconceivable."

As the word "postwar" suggests, Tezuka was an example of the right man at the right time. Comics had existed in Japan before World War II, but they were hardly different from newspaper strips. Tezuka's innovation, beginning with his first smash hit at age 19, *New Treasure Island*, was to incorporate cinematic techniques to make long narratives that ran into hundreds of pages. With a Tezuka comic, the reader suddenly got close-ups, pans and wide-angle shots; it was like "reading" a movie. And with Japan in the ashes of defeat, comics were the one form of visual mass entertainment that could be produced cheaply. The public ate it up—*New Treasure Island* sold 400,000 copies by word-of-mouth alone. Tezuka revolutionized not only artistic technique, but sophistication of storylines. As a licensed physician, Tezuka had both the intelligence and breadth of human experience to create graphic novels of interest to society in general. So, rather than just superheroes, the manga industry developed from a broad-band philosophy of "something for everybody."



Thanks to *Adolf*, Americans can finally get a taste of Osamu Tezuka's work.

But there's a tremendous imbalance of reputation between Tezuka in America and Tezuka in Japan. He may have created manga as we know it, but until this last December's publication from Cadence Books of volume one of *Adolf: A Tale of the Twentieth Century*, Tezuka's works were unavailable in the United States. That's a situation Cadence means to correct, with its high-quality presentation of *Adolf*, available simultaneously as a trade paperback ($16.95) and a hardback ($21.95).



Sohei Toge, one of *Adolf*'s protagonists

"*Adolf* is both a thriller in the classic World War II tradition, and a vehicle for Tezuka to make points about history and racism," says Annette Roman, *Adolf*'s editor. "And being a master storyteller, Tezuka enjoys doing both equally." The story begins in 1936 in Berlin, where the murder of a Japanese reporter's brother leads to him uncovering a strange conspiracy involving three men named Adolf: the first, of course, is the Nazi dictator, while the other two are schoolboy friends in Japan with a secret that could destroy him. The five-volume saga spans well over a thousand pages and is full of twists and turns at every corner, as well as a meticulously detailed historical background.

"How to save the industry, how to make it come alive for a new generation—that's the question these days," says Viz Director of Sales and Marketing Bob Ryan. "But that's the same question Tezuka himself had to deal with through such stories as *Adolf*, done in 1983, when he was an old man and felt that the industry he had created had perhaps passed him by. He responded to the challenge with *Adolf* and expanded comics yet again, this time getting them into the literature section of bookstores with his powerful storytelling technique.

"You know, if you listen to a lot of the insider industry criticism, you hear over and over again that nobody knows how to tell a *story* in comics. Tezuka *can*; the only person I can compare him to in the big houses is Andrew Vachss."

Osamu Tezuka's been wronged in the United States through not only neglect, but also through the infamous, unacknowledged inspiration his Kimba had on Disney's "The Lion King." Most deadly of all to Tezuka, though, has been an American perception among some that the man who created Kimba and Astro Boy has a style way too "cutesy" to succeed over here. It's a real irony that Tezuka, in originating the "big eyes" look of manga, was only copying what he had seen in Disney films growing up—the "weird" look is merely America's own style being exported back.

Tezuka's storytelling techniques not only work, but they represent a genius that hasn't been exploited yet by American comics artists who think manga means only cute girls and massive violence. Yet, it's the narrative genius of Tezuka that better represents manga's true identity as a mass-market success.

Perhaps it's time for a currently struggling U.S. industry to start looking up to the teachings of the God of Manga. **W**

Contrary to public opinion, Carl Horn is not the God of Borscht. He is, however, the undisputed King of Sauerkraut.

picks of the month

manga:
Orion

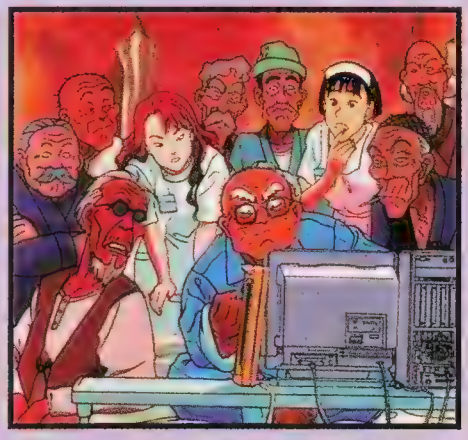
(Dark Horse, $15.95, b&w, 272 pg. graphic novel, now available)

Despite the fact that Masamune Shirow (*Appleseed, Ghost in the Shell*) is perhaps the most influential manga artist in the U.S., many Americans feel ashamed to admit that even in translation they have a hard time following his intricate stories and paste-bombed dialogue. No need to show national shame—the truth is that many Japanese themselves find him difficult to understand. And *Orion* will be no exception, as it shows that Shirow can make fantasy as quirky and complex as sci-fi. In the mythical Yamata Empire, whose inhabitants have mastered—or *think* they have—the physics of magic, priest-wizards plan to trap and destroy all of their society's negative karma. This is a fine idea on "scroll," but is actually the beginning of mass terror and destruction as the very fabric of the world begins to unravel. Have fun trying to sort out Shirow's "dharma bombs" and "yin- and yang-erons," not to mention "octotrigramology," amidst a landscape of sexy sorceresses and super-detailed artwork. As Johnny Carson'd say, "This is weird, wild stuff."

anime:
Roujin Z

(U.S. Manga Corps, dubbed, 80 mins., $29.95, ships April 16)

"Roujin Z" was Katsuhiro Otomo's only anime project between his epochal "Akira" and his new (and as yet-unreleased) feature "Memories." While Otomo did not actually direct "Roujin Z," he wrote, designed and produced it and, visually, it has the "Otomo style" throughout. "Roujin Z" carries the question of "managed care" of the elderly in Japan's increasingly aging society to a dark, satirical anime solution: robots. In this case, it's the Z-001, an automated hospital bed providing all the needs for its invalid test subject, Takazawa—it even links with his brain waves to provide entertainment. The Z-001, responding to Takazawa's whims, quickly develops into something way out of control and goes on a rampage towards an unknown goal locked in the memory of the old man. But instead of the bloody consequences of "our friend, science" as seen in "Akira," the bad technology in "Roujin-Z" often has a "Simpsons"-esque atmosphere to it. So here's your chance to further explore Otomo with a nice change of pace.



DRAWING BOARD

Who needs the pros? This is the show for **Wizard Readers' Art**

The four people whose artwork scored an honorable mention this month will each receive a *Robin* #24 signed by Aaron Lopresti and a *Conan the Adventurer* #1 signed by Rafael Kayanan. Each of the three runners-up scores a *Sensational Spider-Man* #0 signed by Dan Jurgens, an *Amazing Fantasy* #16 signed by Kurt Busiek and a *Wonder Woman* #0 signed by William Messner-Loebs. Jeremy Wilson, this month's ultratalented Grand Prize winner, gets all that stuff, plus a piece of original Superman art by Chris Renaud from the *Outburst: DC Firepower* card set (thanks, Chris)! Congrats, folks!

Fleer SkyBox international™

HEY, EVERYBODY: SkyBox International presents the premiere edition of *OUTBURST: DC FirePower*, the first embossed trading card set from DC Comics. The 80-card set—on store shelves now—lets fans feel the power of DC Comics' most popular heroes and villains, and includes two dynamic levels of chase cards!

And for the next seven months, all painted entries sent to "Drawing Board" will be eligible for Fleer/SkyBox's talent search. The best painter from the next seven months will be commissioned to do a drawing for a 1997 Fleer/SkyBox International Marvel or DC card set!

THE ARTIST

JEREMY WILSON

THE BOOTY

GRAND PRIZE

CALVIN-TIMMY AND HOBBES-PITT **Jeremy Wilson** Kankakee, IL

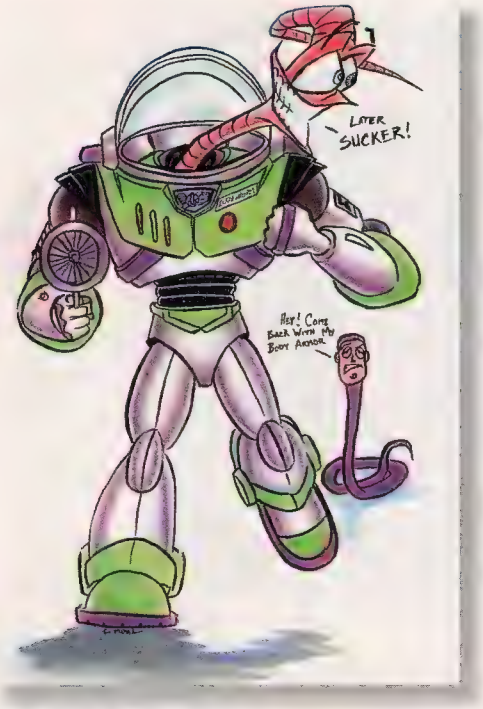
ULTRAFORCE & AVENGERS **Marc Bybee** Nyssa, OR

RIPCLAW **Kyle Kelley** Dickinson, TX

GAREB VS. LOBO **Tristan C. Garcia** Diamond Bar, CA

HONORABLE MENTIONS

BATGIRL VS. CHEETAH
Mark Williams
Front Royal, VA



"EARTHWORM JIM LIGHTYEAR"
Chong Mona
Fresno, CA

SHI
Chris Long
Philadelphia, PA

THE BIRTH OF THE HULK
Justin Smith
Bayonne, NJ

Want your art to appear on one of these three pages in future issues? Think you've got what it takes? (Hey—quality *and* originality count, y'know.) Then send your Drawing Board entries to:

Drawing Board
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

Entries can be e-mailed to WizardTGTC@aol.com (Please use an EPS or TIFF format @ 300 dpi.). And follow these rules or else: Use any form of unlined paper or posterboard (no larger than 8 inches by 11 1/4 inches) and any medium (oils, crayon, mustard, etc.—but not neon inks). Put your name, full address and TELEPHONE NUMBER on the back of your piece, and mail it flat to avoid damage. All entries are nonreturnable and become the property of Wizard Press. Employees of Wizard Press are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Got it? Good luck!

BY JOYCE M. STEEL

Fleer/SkyBox Celebrates 30 Years of Star Trek

The 30th anniversary of the airing of the first "Star Trek" episode (September, 1966) is being celebrated big-time, all year long, everywhere, and Fleer/SkyBox has the card industry covered.

The party started early (as all good ones do) with the release of the first phase of "30 Years of Star Trek" (Ships & Technology) last December, and Phase Two (Personnel & Aliens) will land in stores in mid-April. The final phase (Cosmic Phenomenon & Tributes) ships in September, and fans who buy one box of each phase are eligible for a free six-card press sheet of the Ship Registry Plaque gold foil chase cards from Phase One. Retailers have the details on this hobby-only promotion.

All phases feature several levels of chase cards, including foil and gold foil cards. The 100 regular cards in each phase combine to form a sequential 300-card history of the Star Trek legend (eight cards per pack, suggested retail $1.79). And gamers'll get a piece of the anniversary action too, as Fleer/SkyBox creates the first-ever CCG based on the show for a summer debut.

KROME PRODUCTIONS

Who can resist Archie, Jughead, Veronica, Betty and the rest of the Riverdale gang? Not me. I'll be bellyin' up to the counter for plenty of Krome Productions' *Archie All-Chromium Cards* when they come out this April. This 90-card set's got art from the classic comics, along with some cover and pinup work, and five Holo-Chrome chase cards (seven cards per pack, suggested retail $2.50).

FANTASY ART FORMAT

This April, Comic Images will release its all-MagnaChrome "Supreme" series (pepperoni not included), a mix of never-published art from nine industry hotshots including Boris Vallejo, Frank Frazetta, the Hildebrandts, Joe Linsner and Bill Tucci. Some 2,000 autographed cards (about 200 from each artist) will be randomly inserted in the 90-card set (seven cards per pack, suggested retail $2.49). Also in April, FPG takes 50 of the best works that Keith Parkinson—former TSR game art guru and current sci-fi/fantasy cover artist extraordinaire—has ever done, and blows 'em up for its new Colossal Card series. A foil-stamped autographed card will appear 1:18 packs (five cards per pack, no suggested retail as of yet).

KIDSTUFF

Ever get the feeling as you walk into your favorite card shop that your fellow fans are getting younger and younger? That's 'cause they are, thanks to companies like Fleer/SkyBox and Topps, both of which are deliberately appealing to the little buggers with kids-only card sets. In late March, for instance, Fleer/SkyBox is releasing its second Gargoyles series based on the animated TV show (nine cards per pack, suggested retail $1.29). And Topps follows suit in April with its first set based on the Hercules live-action show (nine cards per pack, suggested retail $1). The target audience for both these 90-card sets includes kids as young as two years old!

HONORABLE MENTIONS go to our Bad Girl of the month, Vampirella, who's living large this April in her own sexy, 36-card Mastervisions set from Topps, and to our bigger, badder boy (well, actually it's a team) of the month, Youngblood, whose 90-card series is also being released in April (with a few extras) in a collectors set from Fleer/SkyBox. W

Joyce Steel lives in her very own house of cards deep in the heart of New Jersey. For obvious reasons, she fears the big, bad wolf.

"I wanna live!!" Celebrate Star Trek's 30th Anniversary with SkyBox.

Boris and his peers contribute some great art to Comic Image's *Supreme* series.

InQuest presents HIT THE DECK

The latest in collectible card game news

• Dying for a *Magic* fix? Well, here's the scoop on the May-release ***Alliances.*** Basically, it's *Ice Age II*, the first supplement to last summer's hugely popular *Ice Age* expansion. (An expansion set to an expansion set?) *Alliances* takes place in the aftermath of Dominaria's Ice Age, following up on those fun-lovin' Kjeldorans and butt-kickin' Balduvians, with rumors circulating about a combination Ancestral Recall/Demonic Tutor card and flying purple hippos.

• For anyone watching TV Friday nights, there's only one sci-fi show that matters: you got it, tough guy, "The X-Files." We've been waiting anxiously for it and NXT Games plans to deliver the ***X-Files* CCG** by late summer. Conspiring aliens, invisible zoo animals, flesh-malleable freaks, serial killers—how can you go wrong?

• There's so much more coming your way that I'm gonna have to go rapid fire! So hold on to your elastic while I run you through 'em: Chaosium's ***Mythos*** and ***Expeditions of Miskatonic University*** expansion; *Shadowfist*'s second expansion, ***Flashpoint***; the ***Highlander Movie Edition***; *Blood Wars*' ***Insurgents of the Inner Planes***; the ***Piracy*** expansion for *Galactic Empires*; *Legend of the Five Rings*' brand-spankin'-new ***Shadowlands*** expansion; and *Rage*'s ***War of the Amazons***. Whew. ■ *Michael Searle*

Michael Searle is the editor of Wizard's sister mag InQuest, the all-around grooviest guide to collectible card games.

PICKS

WIZARD's list of must-read comic books coming out in April

BATMAN: BLACK & WHITE

Writers: Archie Goodwin, Joe Kubert, Ted McKeever, Howard Chaykin, Bruce Timm
Artists: Jose Muñoz, Joe Kubert, Ted McKeever, Howard Chaykin, Bruce Timm
Release Date: April 3
Cover Price: $2.95

DC COMICS Each issue of this four-part, 48-page series features five eight-page stories by top creators working in black and white. But it promises more than simply Batman stories without the coloring, says co-editor Scott Peterson. "This isn't just line art," he explains. "Each story will have gray tones and a mood that evokes a pulpy, film-noir feel." That style inspired the creators to produce moody, detective-oriented tales.

Conceived and coordinated by co-editor Mark Chiarello, the first issue kicks off with a bang. Ted McKeever pens a tale that Peterson calls "absolutely brilliant. It's really grim and beautifully written." In it, Batman performs an autopsy on a dead Jane Doe. By examining her body, he pieces together enough clues to where and how she died to allow him to go after the killer.

Bruce Timm, a producer for "The Adventures of Batman and Robin" known for his art on the acclaimed 1994 *Batman: Mad Love* one-shot, takes a similarly somber tone in his story about Two-Face's collapsed rehabilitation. "It's extremely dark and gruesome," Peterson says. "It's a tale of deception and betrayal. A lot of people who are familiar with Bruce's art will be surprised by how wonderful his writing is too."

Joe Kubert's story takes "almost a fantastical look at Batman, sort of a fantasy/nightmare version," Peterson relates, while Howard Chaykin's story focuses on "what Howard does best. He looks at these characters as if they really existed. It's a neat little story, very much with the Chaykin tongue-in-cheek style." Finally, Archie Goodwin and acclaimed international artist Jose Muñoz team up on a story set in the 1940s about a jazz musician whose instrument has caused countless downfalls. "Archie very much was writing for Jose," Peterson says. "This is a very pulpy-looking story."

If you like *Batman: Black & White*, *Wizard* recommends you read... any clutch noir Bat-story like *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* or *Batman: Year One*, both of which are currently available in trade paperback format. Also, any *Sin City* material by Frank Miller shows great use of black-and-white storytelling; check out the current *Sin City: That Yellow Bastard* mini-series from Dark Horse.

SILVER SURFER: DANGEROUS ARTIFACTS

Writer: Ron Marz
Artist: Claudio Castellini
Release Date: April 9
Cover Price: $3.95

MARVEL Literally years in the making, this one-shot will blow readers' minds, says writer Ron Marz. "This project easily is the most amazing piece of comic artwork I've ever been involved with," he states. "The detail Claudio put into this is mind-boggling. The people up at Marvel are just baffled at how he could have done it."

That attention to detail came from Castellini's painstaking years of work on the story, Marz says. "I wrote the plot for this nearly four years ago, before I was engaged," he laughs. "Now I'm married and have a baby, and it's finally going to come out. It's 48 pages and Claudio took three years to do it; you can do the math on how fast he worked. He really labored over it, and the editors decided to let him take his time and do his very best. That approach paid off."

The story focuses on a comet that has appeared in our part of the universe after a billion-year orbit. Fabled as the repository for a fabulous energy source, it catches the attention of Galactus. He in turn manipulates the Silver Surfer into retrieving it. At the same time, another mysterious figure gains the help of a new female character named White Raven to do the same thing. Ultimately, she squares off against the silver skyrider.

"The difference between her approach to her goal and the Silver Surfer's approach makes up a major part of the story," Marz explains. "She's a mercenary—very cold, calculating and ruthless. That sets up a real diversity between the Surfer's nobility and her merciless methods. We bounce back and forth between them before they meet up."

While there have been many Surfer stories in the past few years, there has never been one like this, Marz claims. "Claudio's Galactus is easily the most spectacular version ever done," he states. That covers a lot of territory—but Marz knows it. "Everybody—Kirby, Moebius, Ron Lim—all of them take a back seat to what Claudio did here."

Early word of mouth indicates Marz may not be exaggerating. In an unusual move, Marvel released a black-and-white version of this story, featuring Castellini's toned inks, at the major Italian comics convention last fall. "It was huge," Marz says. "Fans who saw his pencils on *Marvel versus DC* have seen just a hint of what he's capable of producing."

■ Big Picks written by Craig Shutt

If you like *Silver Surfer: Dangerous Artifacts*, Wizard recommends you read...both Jim Starlin and Ron Marz's runs as writers of Marvel's ongoing *Silver Surfer* series (#34-#102). Also check out Marz's stellar work on DC's *Green Lantern*.

MORE PICKS

AQUAMAN #21

DC COMICS Y'know, Aquaman seems to be fighting insurmountable odds every freakin' day. Doesn't he ever just hang with the fishes? (Just like Luca Brasi does.) Take this ish, for instance: Aquaman, Dolphin and Garth are vastly outpowered when they go up against the magical city of Thierna Na Oge. Plus, another huge meteor ship crashes down, signaling the beginning of the alien invasion! By Peter David, Jim Calafiore and Peter Palmiotti. **$1.75**

THE AVENGERS #399

MARVEL Issue #399? Geez. Wasn't it just yesterday when the Circus of Crime stuck that giant snake in Yellowjacket and the Wasp's wedding cake? Anyway, two unstoppable enemies are closing in on the Avengers and it looks like there's only one guy who can play hero. Can the Avengers rely on him to do the deed? Earth's Mightiest Stories by Mark Waid, Terry Kavanagh, Mike Deodato Jr. and Tom Palmer. **$1.50**

BATMAN #531

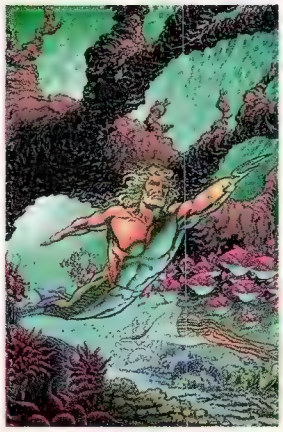
DC COMICS "The Deadman Connection," Part 2 (of 3). Gotham's finest (Not the cops, silly. We're talkin' about Batman!) and Deadman pack their bags and head for Peru. There, they eat lots of beans. We mean, *lots* of beans. Plus, Bats and Baldy fight a bunch o' mercenary thugs who have an entire native population enslaved. By Doug Moench, Kelley Jones and John Beatty. **$2.50 (ENHANCED COVER); $1.95 (REGULAR EDITION)**

BATMAN AND ROBIN ADVENTURES #7

DC COMICS How dumb do you have to be, for your dummy to want you dead? Huh? Well, it seems Scarface is really pissed off at the Ventriloquist, so he puts a hit on the V-Man's family. Now it's up to Batman to save the Ventriloquist from...his own right hand. (Insert your own joke here.) By Ty "never trust a sock puppet" Templeton and Rick "Muppets frighten me" Burchett. **$1.75**

BONE #24

IMAGE That big lug Lucius returns to Barrelhaven to discover that the entire town is under Phoney Bone's control. (Lucius ain't gonna be happy. Hope Phoney's got insurance!) Plus, Fone Bone's got control of Gran'ma Ben's medallion! By Jeff Smith. **$2.95**



AQUAMAN #21

BONE #24

DAREDEVIL #353

DEATH: THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE #3

CAPTAIN AMERICA #452

MARVEL "Man Without a Country," Part 3 (of 4). Cap is cool!!! When's the last time you could say that with a straight face? However, the rest of the U.S. sees Cap as a traitorous scum and has in fact exiled him from America. Now, with Sharon's help, they're off to stop World War III from becoming a reality! (Didn't Cap just join the Skull to stop that from happening? What's with this country?) By Mark Waid, Ron Garney and Scott Koblish. Waid says, "Machinesmith knows everything Captain America knows. *Everything*. And he's using that knowledge to destroy the world. Cap finds Machinesmith, who holds [him and Sharon] captive, and at the end of the issue, the cliffhanger is you can either save the SHIELD Helicarrier from crashing into a mountain or you can save the President of the United States from being assassinated. One of the two. What are you going to do?" **$1.50**

CONCRETE: THINK LIKE A MOUNTAIN #2 (OF 6)

LEGEND/DARK HORSE What the heck does a mountain think of? How many sheep and goats are gonna mark their scents on it that day? Sheesh. Anyway, Concrete gets suckered into helping the environmental group Earth First! sneak into Canada (like that's tough) and sabotage a bunch of logging equipment. Unfortunately, the equipment's owners show up and Concrete's gotta play hero and save everyone. By Paul Chadwick. **$2.95**

DAREDEVIL #353

MARVEL Once again, ol' Hornhead gets a kick in the tail with a new creative team! Just when everything seems to be in order for DD, he hits a li'l snag. The law firm is taken over and there may not be room for some blind lawyer called Matt Murdock. By Karl Kesel and Cary Nord. Kesel says, "In many ways, we're doing a back-to-basics with the character. I enjoy more light-hearted characters, and that was the editorial direction given to me—a more light-hearted hero who enjoys his work. Daredevil fights Mr. Hyde in this issue and Mr. Hyde is arrested for the murder of a young girl. And in the next issue, Matt Murdock is hired to defend Mr. Hyde. One

MORE PICKS

of the things this does is firmly establish Hyde as a Daredevil villain. When and *if* Hyde shows up again, Daredevil will feel very personally responsible." **$1.95**

DEATH: THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE #3 (OF 3)

VERTIGO/DC Join Foxglove and Co. as they enter Death's realm and learn that Hazel's son Alvie is pretty damn important. Why? Hey, read the issue and find out yourself! (Damn kids.) And while you see who lives and dies this issue, that cutie Death finally tells the importance of The Time of Your Life. By Neil Gaiman and Mark Buckingham. **$2.95**

DETECTIVE COMICS #697

DC COMICS Batman better start searching the classifieds for a new job, 'cause it looks like he's replaceable after all. When a whole swarm o' criminals start disappearing (including Two-Face and Charaxes), it seems that some cop-wannabe called Lock-Up is behind it. (Cool! He was on "Batman: The Animated Series." Let's hope Batman kicks his ass here just like he did on that episode.) By Chuck "Nails" Dixon, Graham "Stoolie" Nolan and Scott "Warden's Pet" Hanna. **$1.95**

THE DREAMING #1

VERTIGO/DC "The Goldie Factor," Part 1 (of 3). Here's a twist. Cain actually murders Abel! Yawn. *Real* original. But wait! The key difference here is that it's one time too many. Goldie the cute li'l gargoyle just can't take it anymore, so he runs away from the House of Secrets and bumps into an evil creature called Tempto. Together they take a tour of the Dreaming and unearth some pretty bizarre and spooky stuff! By Terry LaBan and Peter Snejbjerg. This tale's for you mature readers, even though it's got cute li'l gargoyles in it. **$2.50**

ELFQUEST: METAMORPHOSIS #1

WARP GRAPHICS As Ernie searches for his lost Keebler kinsman, their arch-enemy Doughboy performs a rudeness most severe to a box of Deluxe Grahams. Oh, wait, wrong elves. Sorry. This one-shot is a turning point in the Elfquest mythos. For newcomers, it's full of recaps to bring you up to speed on the coolest elves this side of Santa's little helpers, and for cult followers it contains preludes for a whole bunch of new ongoing series beginning in May. So join the hunt! By Wendy Pini, Richard Pini and tons of other creative people. **$2.95**

DETECTIVE COMICS #697

THE DREAMING #1

ELFQUEST: METAMORPHOSIS #1

GENERATION X #16

ELRIC: ONE LIFE #0

TOPPS COMICS Ah, Elric, the tragic tale of an albino and his evil sword. (Sounds kinda silly when you say it like that, but actually it's really cool!) This one-shot stars 12-year-old Richard Grey, who's your typical kid: unathletic, everyone picks on him, his face looks like the lunar surface—you get the idea. But Richard loves the Elric works and uses those fantasy novels as a shield against everyone around him. Intriguing stuff by Neil Gaiman and P. Craig Russell. This nifty tale is suggested for you mature reader folks. **$2.95**

THE FLASH #114

DC COMICS If ya know what's good for ya, you won't hang around the Flash! This guy is a danger magnet! And it don't matter if you're a hero or a villain. Take this issue, for example: Yet another of Flash's enemies meets a gruesome fate as the deadly Chillblaine goes hunting in Keystone City. First Savitar, now Chillblaine? Geez, whatever happened to pansy villains like Captain Boomerang or Weather Wizard? By Mark Waid, Oscar Jimenez and Anthony Castrillo. **$1.75**

GENERATION X #16

MARVEL Hey, did anyone catch that "Generation X" made-for-TV movie a month or so ago? Heh. 'Nuff said. This wacky mutant-packed issue sees Husk, M (What the hell kinda name is "M"?) and Jubilee take on their friend and teammate Synch! But to save him, they've got to kill him! Some friends. By Scott Lobdell, Tom Grummet and Mark Buckingham. Lobdell says, "A character like Everett Thomas [Synch], because he isn't angst-ridden or particularly handicapped by his power or because he doesn't have a bunch of skeletons in his closet, is easy to overlook sometimes. Kind of like a well behaved child in a family. And this story pulls him into center stage and shows that not only does he have the personality to conceivably be the dark horse candidate for eventual leader of the group, but also that he has the potential power as well." **$1.95**

GREEN LANTERN #74

DC COMICS If you're not reading this comic, you're a grade-A

MORE PICKS

knucklehead. Trust us, it's one of the best titles out there. Period! Kyle heads to Rann after hearing a plea for help from Donna Troy, and witnesses the Darkstars dropping like flies as they take on the superior might of Grayven (one of Darkseid's sons!) and his superior army. Even worse, their next victim could be John Stewart! Great stuff by Ron Marz, Darryl Banks and Romeo Tanghal. **$1.75**

GRENDEL TALES: THE DEVIL MAY CARE #5

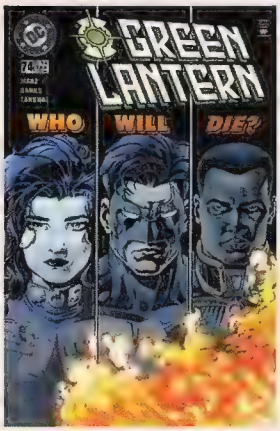
DARK HORSE There's trouble in Indianapolis. And when even the Grendels can't handle it, you know it's serious! It seems Hack (their leader) is in love with a nurse by the name of Dana. Here's the kicker: Dana's son is the one causing trouble by killing off Grendels left and right. That certainly puts Hack in a compromising position! Lose the love of his life or his Grendel status! By Terry LaBan and Peter Doherty. It's suggested for mature types. LaBan says, "I kind of thought of [this story] as almost a Shakespearean tragedy. [*Laughs*] Just in the sense that it's a story about power, and I was taking the whole Grendel thing—this ultra-violent, macho motorcycle gang thing—and looking at it in a different way, in terms of what happens to people like that when they actually get control. You fight for this power and control, and once you have it, it demands certain responsibilities from you." **$2.95**

IMPULSE #14

DC COMICS All right! The Trickster's in town and he's all set to launch the ultimate con job. Fortunately for him, he figured on Impulse's interference. Unfortunately for him, he never put White Lightning (Black Lightning's long-lost cousin?) into the equation. By Mark Waid, Anthony Williams and Wayne Faucher. **$1.75**

THE INCREDIBLE HULK #442

MARVEL Where's the Hulk? Nobody seems to know. And now She-Hulk and Doc Samson have joined the search. And while that's going on, see Talbot on trial and the final fate of Omnibus! And if that ain't enough to rub your rhubarb, you'll also witness the premiere of Rick Jones' new talk show. Hoo boy. By Peter David, Angel Medina and Robin Riggs. **$1.95**



GREEN LANTERN #74

GRENDEL TALES: THE DEVIL MAY CARE #5

LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #81

DC COMICS Hey, kids. Here's something to avoid: jumping into the heart of a nuclear reactor! Chances are you'll be fried to a crisp just like one of them mice that are always falling into fast-food fryers—unless, of course, your name's Dirk Morgna! The Dirkster returns and will either join the Legion or destroy it with his sunlike powers! By Tom Peyer, Tom McCraw, Lee Moder and Ron Boyd. **$2.25**

LEGIONNAIRES #37

DC COMICS Now that the United Planets has taken away the Legion's "draft" rights, the team must decide its fate! Who will stay and who will go? While that great debate goes on, Kinetix puts the Empress to the wall over the whereabouts of the Emerald Eye! By Roger Stern, Tom McCraw, Jeffrey Moy and W.C. Carani. **$2.25**

LONE RANGER & TONTO: THE VELVET DRAGON #1 (OF 5)

TOPPS COMICS Hi, ho, Goddamn Silver! Seems the Ice House Bandits have captured and unmasked our hero. Worse, they hung

WHAT I'M READING

name: **Louise Simonson**

occupation: **Writer of DC's *Superman: The Man of Steel* and *Steel*, and Dark Horse's *Star Wars: River of Chaos***

currently reads: "I read all the Superman titles, and I think they're *really* good. [*Laughs*] I guess I'd probably read them even if I wasn't on them. I guess I got on them because they were real good to begin with. I read *Groo* because it's consistently funny. *Impulse* is really good. *Superboy* is always really good. It's amusing and Karl Kesel's dialogue is real snappy; I like his work very much. I like John Ostrander's *Spectre*; I think he does a real nice job with that. I like Jerry Ordway's *Power of Shazam!* I think he does a real, real fun job with that."

Photo by J. Schuyler

MORE PICKS

'im up by a noose and put him on a block of ice. Now the Ranger's gotta beat the clock or strengthen his neck *real* fast! (Aw, heck, he can't die—it's only the first issue!) Tonto and the Lone Ranger also bump into their mentor Wu Chan, who needs them to defeat the evil Velvet Dragon! By Joe R. Lansdale and Ted Naifeh. **$2.95**

PREACHER #14

VERTIGO/DC "Hunters," Part 2 (of 4). Bloodier than "ER." Funnier than "Joanie Loves Chachi." *Preacher*'s got it all! If you're not faint of heart, give this book a chance. This issue has Jesus de Sade demanding his secret stash, Starr needing a break, and Jesse (that's our Preacher) and Cassidy (that's our vampire—nice bloke, though) wanting information! This one includes the secret of the Grail, folks. By Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon. **$2.50**

ROBIN #30

DC COMICS When the Boy Wonder busts up a robbery, he ends up being captured by Maxie Zeus. Ol' Zeusie (who just happens to be completely out of his gourd) thinks that Robin can help him contact Oracle. Now what would a nutcase like Zeus want with Oracle? Plus, Ariana dates some real loser. Good! Serves her right. Maybe now she'll come running back to Tim, a real man! By Chuck Dixon, Frank Fosco and Stan Woch. **$1.95**

SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE #39

VERTIGO/DC "The Mist," Part 3 (of 4). Ted Knight, no longer possessing the powers of the mighty Cosmic Cow, is a prime suspect in the Sandman's investigation of a murdering saboteur who happens to be using the very same energy rod that Knight invented. Hmm... Intriguing stuff by Matt Wagner, Steven Seagle and Guy Davis. **$2.25**

SCUD: THE DISPOSABLE ASSASSIN #12

FIREMAN PRESS Our friendly neighborhood disposable assassin is finally back to what poses as normal. (He was running around with a werewolf's arm for a while, but that's a loooong story.) This month, Scud enters the International Tough Guy Competition, where bulked-up morons compete in ludicrous sporting events (Free-for-All Lava Hockey, Anti-Gravity Bull Fighting) to prove who the toughest guy in the world really is. By Rob Schrab. **$2.95**

THE INCREDIBLE HULK #442

PREACHER #14

SIN CITY: THAT YELLOW BASTARD #3

SPIDER-MAN: LEGACY OF EVIL

SIN CITY: THAT YELLOW BASTARD #3 (OF 6)

LEGEND/DARK HORSE Poor Hartigan. He's been locked up in the slammer for eight years now after being convicted of raping a little girl named Nancy. Can you blame his wife for leaving him after that? Thing is, he didn't do it. And now Hartigan's gotta track down the few living folks that know the truth, 'cause they're the ones who set him up. So now they owe Hartigan eight years of their lives—and he aims to collect! This cool story, suggested for you mature types, is by the fuzzy Frank Miller. **$2.95**

SPIDER-MAN: LEGACY OF EVIL

MARVEL That damn Green Goblin just won't stay dead! When the son of Harry Osborn (the second Green Goblin) is kidnapped, Spidey, Ben Urich and the Molten Man (Who?) must rescue the li'l urchin before the Goblin is reborn! A historical tale brought yer way by writer Kurt Busiek and painter Mark Texeira. **$3.95**

STRANGERS IN PARADISE #11

ABSTRACT STUDIOS It seems that that weasel Freddie is still trying to win back Francine, and Francine seems to be buckling under the pressure. This, of course, makes Katchoo real jealous! But fear not, romance lovers, because Katchoo has a plan! Excellent stuff from Terry Moore, who says, "That's the one where Katchoo and Francine have a big fight. It's not gonna be a tearful fight, it's a funny fight. We've never really seen them have a fight where they trash the entire inside of the house. It's the big, big catfight of the series. [*Laughs*] At the end of it, it forces both of them to do something they don't want to do. Katchoo is insanely jealous and she comes up with a real simple plan to make Francine jealous—she comes up with a new love interest. And it's a real surprise twist as to who she comes up with." **$2.75**

SUPERBOY #28

DC COMICS "Losin' It," Part 4 (of 6). Road trip! Supergirl heads off to Hawaii to knock some sense into Superboy. Y'see, she (and

MORE PICKS

the rest o' the world) thinks that Superboy hathes gone bad just 'cause he's helping out that Knockout babe. Thing is, before she gets to Superboy, she's gotta go through Knockout! All right, get 'em in some thongs, toss 'em in Jell-O and pass the chips! By Karl Kesel, Staz Johnson and Doug Hazlewood. **$1.95**

THE UNCANNY X-MEN #333

MARVEL The X-Men discover a huge government-run conspiracy entitled Operation Zero Tolerance. And guess what its main objective is. Yep, hunting down mutie scum! Why can't we all just get along? By Scott Lobdell, Joe Madureira and Tim Townsend. **$1.95**

UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN #10

MARVEL Spidey gets all squishy inside as his hormones are in an uproar at the mere sight of Commanda. (Getting excited + spandex = "Mommy, what's in Spider-Man's pocket?") Unfortunately, while Commanda's beauty gets the best of the wall-crawler, her henchmen beat the living tar outta him! Sounds like a typical teenager's day. By Kurt Busiek, Pat Olliffe and Al Vey. **99 CENTS**

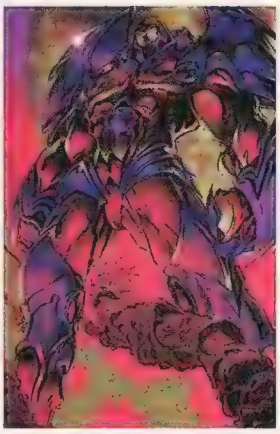
WILDC.A.T.S #29

IMAGE The original WildC.A.T.s team makes its way back to Earth in the midst of the whole "Fire From Heaven" crossover. Talk about your bad timing! So obviously, the team quickly finds itself on Gamorra Island in the middle of a big melee. And it's a good thing StormWatch is there, 'cause the C.A.T.s have a certain score to settle with them! Plus, Spartan's true origin is slowly revealed! By Alan Moore, Travis Charest and Troy Hubbs. **$2.50**

X-MEN #53

MARVEL That big, evil sucker who goes by the name o' Onslaught is on his way! Remember he pounded Juggernaut to a bloody pulp back in *Uncanny X-Men* #322? Not a good thing. Also, just what the heck is that hush-hush secret room Xavier's got hidden in the mansion? (Ten bucks says it's got a hole in the wall to Bishop's room. Note: Never trust bald guys named Charles.) By Mark Waid, Andy Kubert and Cam Smith. **$1.95** W

UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN #10



X-MEN #53

AT A GLANCE!

A listing of the high-profile books shipping in April

Action Comics #722 (DC Comics) While Lois uncovers a secret wedding, a tornado threatens the Kent home. **$1.95**

Adventures of Superman #535 (DC Comics) Lois and Lori Lemaris have a biiiig girl talk, as Luthor plots against Alpha Centurion. **$1.95**

Amazing Spider-Man #412 (Marvel) The conclusion to "Blood Brothers" sees Spidey fight the person behind the ruining of his life. Plus, the final fate of Peter and MJ. **$1.50**

Crusade Special: Shi vs. Tomoe #1 (Crusade) These two warriors fight a deadly battle in NYC, with only one of them living through the experience! **$3.95**

Gen¹³ #10 (Image) The kids fight Ivana and her new team, the Deviants. Plus, Fairchild's father (and Team 7 founder) shows up! **$2.50**

Grifter/Shi #2 (Image) Grifter and Shi must put aside their differences and team up to stop the devastation of Tokyo. **$2.95**

Lady Death: The Odyssey #2 (Chaos!) A weakened Lady Death falls prey to two druids in a mystical desert. **$2.95**

Medieval Spawn/Witchblade #1 (Image) Medieval Spawn and a former Witchblade share a romantic link, as well as the key to today's Spawn and Witchblade. **$2.95**

Sensational Spider-Man #5 (Marvel) Part 5 of "Blood Brothers" sees Spidey and Peter Parker meet the Molten Man. **$1.95**

Spawn #48-#49 (Image) Spawn builds a new hideout and has a meeting with Sam and Twitch. Plus, Terry Fitzgerald faces a fatal illness. **$1.95 each**

Spectacular Spider-Man #235 (Marvel) Spidey tries to get his life back in order as he fights a deadly foe. **$1.50**

Spider-Man #69 (Marvel) Spidey may have met his match when he takes on a powerful new enemy. **$1.95**

Superman #112 (DC Comics) Lois and Clark start to work out some of their relationship problems, and there may just be wedding bells for L&C. **$1.95**

Superman: The Man of Steel #57 (DC Comics) A whole bunch o' tornadoes threatens Smallville. Good thing Supes is around. **$1.95**

Team 7 III: Dead Reckoning #4 (Image) Craven orders Deathblow, Backlash and Lynch to hunt down Grifter and the other half of Team 7, who have taken a break from I.O. **$2.50**

Vengeance of Vampirella #25 (Harris Comics) Mistress Nyx assembles an intense group of evil beings and sends them after Vampi and her friends. **$2.95**

Wolverine #102 (Marvel) Elektra hunts down a mutated Wolverine through the streets of New York City. **$1.95**

X-Factor #123 (Marvel) Sabretooth hops on board the X-Factor bandwagon and helps look for Mystique's attacker from *X-Men: Prime*. **$1.95**

The X-Files #17 (Topps Comics) Doug Moench (*Batman* writer) tells this bizarre and paranormal tale starring agents Scully and Mulder. **$2.95**

X-Force #55 (Marvel) Warpath's missing, Deadpool's acting wacky and just who the heck is Risque? **$1.95**

X-Man #16 (Marvel) That Holocaust loser comes gunning for the X-Man! **$1.95**

X-Men Unlimited #11 (Marvel) Rogue runs to Magneto's arms, but will she turn him over to her teammates or fall in love with him? **$3.95** W

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Miramax/Dimension Films, Pressman Films and Kitchen Sink Press present...

The "Count Them Crows" contest

CONTEST!

(BIRD WATCHING WAS NEVER SO MUCH FUN!)

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Wanna go to the movies?

This summer, "The Crow: City of Angels" will be coming to a theater near you! The fine people sponsoring this contest want you and *50* of your friends to go to a special preview screening. That's right, we said 50—the big five-oh! And the hardest part of this contest will probably be finding 50 friends. But hey—if you offer something as cool as this for free, you'll definitely make lots of new friends. Here's what you do:

There are several Crow logos (like the one below) hidden on the pages of this very issue. All you need to do is count 'em, write down that magic number and mail it with the coupon. It's that easy. The winner will be selected randomly from among all the correct entries! Oh, yeah—there's some great prizes, too.

Great Prizes

Grand Prize (3): That's right. Three Grand Prizes. THREE lucky winners will each get to take 50 of their friends to the movies, popcorn not included. And if that's not amazing enough, we'll also throw in a set of the three-issue mini-series *The Crow: Dead Time* from Kitchen Sink Press and a "The Crow: City of Angels" movie poster! All for just counting birds!

Second Prize (50): Fifty winners will each get the three-issue mini-series *The Crow: Dead Time*, with issue #1 signed by Crow creator James O'Barr.

Third Prize (100): One hundred winners will each get a "The Crow: City of Angels" movie poster.

Here's what you're looking for!

(This one don't count.)

KITCHEN SINK PRESS

EDWARD R. PRESSMAN FILM CORPORATION

MIRAMAX/DIMENSION FILMS

This contest is sponsored by Miramax/Dimension Films, Pressman Films and Kitchen Sink Press Inc. Groovy.

THE CROW™

™ & © 1996 Bad Bird Productions

Fill this sucker out, put it in an envelope and send it to: Count Them Crows Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. The super-extended summer movie spectacular deadline is June 28, 1996!

One for Sorrow, Two for Legal Text

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Miramax/Dimension Films, Pressman Films, Kitchen Sink Press and their immediate families or scarecrows. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form, a standard postcard or a 3-by-5-inch index card and tell us how many crows you spotted in this issue. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: Count Them Crows Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. Don't you hate all that gooey stuff on the bottom of your shoes when you go to the movies? Eeeew-yeeew! **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by June 28, 1996.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected randomly from among all correct entries by Wizard Press. Drawing will take place on July 15, 1996.

For a list of winners, available after July 15, 1996, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Count Them Crows Winners List, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Crow Contest!

DEADLINE IS JUNE 28, 1996!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

How Many Crows? _____

Buttered or Plain? _____

***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. Here are March's hottest back issues.**

TOP 10 COMICS

1. THE X-FILES #1

WRITER: Stefan Petrucha ARTIST: Charles Adlard

Hey, didja know that there was a recent *Rolling Stone* cover that featured Agents Scully and Mulder in bed together? You didn't? Well, that's 'cause it was only available in Europe!!! Geez, we Americans sure are prudes compared to them thar foreign fellas. Anyways, this comic is *still* hotter'n three-alarm chili. And why shouldn't it be, seein' as how it's based on the happeningest sci-fi show on the planet? (At least till they bring back "Manimal," that is!) This ish tells a neat story that's chock full o' mysterious deaths, cool dismemberments and the Fatima prophecy that supposedly tells lotsa important secrets about life itself. Just don't read it (the prophecy, not the comic, silly), or chances are you're dead!

2. DC VERSUS MARVEL #1

WRITER: Ron Marz ARTISTS: Dan Jurgens, Josef Rubinstein, Claudio Castellini and Paul Neary

What the? A comic starring mainstream superheroes in the number two spot? Why it's...it's...it's unthinkable! In case you've been locked in the basement (don't ask) or something, this superhot miniseries pairs off DC's rip-roarin' heroes against Marvel's rough 'n' tough superdudes in a battle of cosmic proportions, with the ultimate prize being survival and the losing universe going the way of the Dodo. And the clinker is that the fans got to vote on the outcomes of five of the biggest battles! (Yeah, that's real fair. Two out of the five Marvel combatants were X-Men! And guess who won *their* fights!) Cool characters, fan participation, hot writers, hot artists. Yep, sounds like a hot book to us!

3. PREACHER #1

WRITER: Garth Ennis
ARTIST: Steve Dillon

Talk about your divine intervention! This awesome Vertigo series hasn't been *climbing* the charts—it's been *flying*! Fans just can't seem to get enough of Jesse Custer (not your typical preacher) and his bizarre companions. The awesome creative team of Ennis and Dillon, who brought John Constantine to great heights with their long run on *Hellblazer*, is telling some very unique horror-romance-humor-violent-we've-gotta-find-God types of stories. And heck, the Duke himself (that's John Wayne we're talkin' about, not Bo or Luke) shows up now and then.

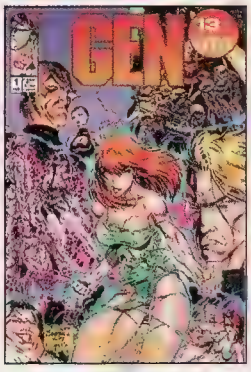
NUMBER THREE

NUMBER FOUR

4. PREACHER #2

WRITER: Garth Ennis
ARTIST: Steve Dillon

What the monkey?! This issue just popped up outta nowhere! And it starts with a veritable bang! Actually, a lot of bangs! That there pardner on the cover is the Saint o' Killers, only the meanest, baddest, nastiest hat-wearin' skunk on the planet. And he's out hunting for our pal, Jesse, who's...wait-aminnit, is it just us, or does the guy on that wanted poster look a lot more like Val Kilmer than it does Jesse? Ah, he deserves it after thinking of bailing out on the next Batman flick.



NUMBER FIVE

5. GEN[13] #1 (MINI-SERIES)

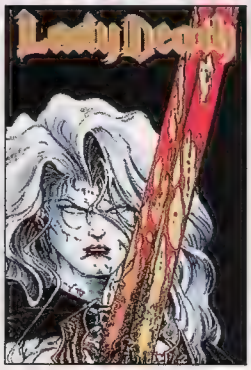
WRITERS: Jim Lee and Brandon Choi
ARTISTS: J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner

There was a time when these five superpowered teens ruled the Top Ten like a mighty tyrant. They must've been number one for like 900 months or something, and now they've fallen to the halfway point (which still ain't too shabby!). Although with the Gen[13]ers starring in an animated movie due for release later this year, you shouldn't count them out of the fight yet! And heck, maybe they'll even put out a made-for-TV movie that'll be as good...snicker...as Fox's "Generation X" one.

6. LADY DEATH #1

WRITER: Brian Pulido
ARTIST: Steven Hughes

Ooooh, Lady Death sure looks pissed here! It's probably 'cause she slipped a few notches in the chart, thanks to *Preacher*. Lady Death, ruler of the Endless Graveyard and dead thingies, knocked down by a preacher who's off searching for God. Y'know, there's gotta be a lesson in there somewhere. Well, even though there are signs that the whole "Bad Girl" craze is coolin' off a bit, Ms. Death is still pushing her way to the forefront. (Yeah, yeah, we know, she's got a big advantage in that department.)



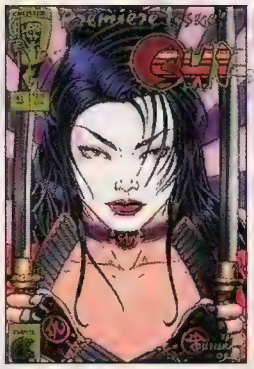
NUMBER SIX

NUMBER SEVEN

7. MARVEL VERSUS DC #2

WRITER: Peter David
ARTISTS: D. Jurgens, J. Rubinstein, C. Castellini and P. Neary

Wow! It's a nice change to see superheroes among all the babes, teens, special agents and girls wearin' practically nuthin' that usually fill the rest of this chart. This ish continues the big brouhaha between Marvel and DC with such funky melees as Quicksilver takin' on the Flash (pretty cool fight) and Aquaman duking it out with Sub-Mariner. But that last fight seems kinda fishy to us, seeing as how Peter David (*Aquaman* scribe) wrote this issue...



NUMBER EIGHT

8. SHI #1

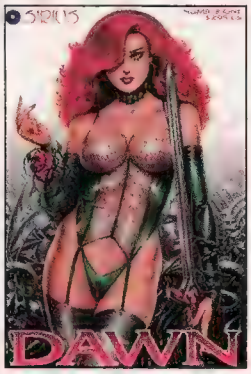
WRITERS: William Tucci and Peter Gutierrez
ARTISTS: William Tucci and Barry Orkin

Wanna know a little secret? No, it has nothing to do with George Clooney or pants. It seems that April's Shi/Tomoe Special will see one of these two woman warriors die! No lies! No bull! Only one of them survives the fight, and word on the street is that Shi's the one who dies! Regardless of the outcome, this ish still features some nifty storytelling and art by our pal, the Tooch.

9. DAWN #1

WRITER: Joseph Michael Linsner
ARTIST: Joseph Michael Linsner

Hey, it's a veritable Bad Girl sammich! We've got Shi above us, Angela right below and hey, there's Lady Death to the left! Looks like the girls had a slumber party and we weren't invited! Well, we won't hold it against them, seein' as how they're all pretty hot (their books, that is). Dawn here's no exception, with some gorgeous art and neato storytellin'. And she even helps people, so she can't be all Bad.



NUMBER NINE

10. ANGELA #1

WRITER: Neil Gaiman
ARTIST: Greg Capullo

A McFarlane character at the number ten slot? How odd. Especially when that someone is a hot babe in teeny li'l armor that would be snug on a Lilliputian. Anyhoo, expect this book to really pick up steam when the new Angela mini-series hits the shelves in late '96. (As a sidenote, why the hell was that other supporting character angel chick named "Tiffany"? The only people named Tiffany are Barbie accessory-friends and jock-girlfriends from bad "Revenge of the Nerds" sequels.) W

NUMBER TEN

THE NEXT TEN

THE NEXT 10 HOT BOOKS AND THE COMPANIES THAT MAKE THEM

11. THE X-FILES #2 TOPPS
12. GLORY #1 IMAGE
13. SPAWN #9 IMAGE
14. WOLVERINE #75 MARVEL
15. X-MEN: ALPHA MARVEL
16. VENGEANCE OF VAMPIRELLA #1 HARRIS
17. THE MAXX #1 IMAGE
18. ASH #1 EVENT
19. GENERATION X #1 MARVEL
20. SPAWN #1 IMAGE

The Weapon Zero at Ground Zero Contest!

Top Cow

The countdown is over—Top Cow's new *Weapon Zero* ongoing series has blasted into comic stores planetwide. The tale of these intergalactic protectors of Earth has fans buzzing, and you can get in on some great prizes...if you know the score.

How to Play

It's a breeze. Just answer these three incredibly simple *Weapon Zero* trivia questions. Don't know the answers? Read the book!

1. Who are the five members of Weapon Zero?
2. What is the name of the Golthang Lord who got blowed up real good at the end of the *Weapon Zero* mini-series?
3. What is the name of Col. Tyson Stone's former commanding officer?

Get them all right and you could reach Ground Zero, as in the very creation of Weapon Zero, with these keen-as-hell prizes:

Prizes

Grand Prize (1): One reader will receive a piece of *Weapon Zero* original art and a set of the *Weapon Zero* mini-series issues (#T-4, #T-3, #T-2, #T-1 and #0) autographed by their creators.

Second Prize (10): Ten readers will each receive a copy of *Weapon Zero* #1 autographed by its cool creators: Walt Simonson, Joe Benitez and Aaron Sowd.

This contest is sponsored by Top Cow Productions, makers of fine comic books and dairy products.

Fill this sucker out, put it in an envelope and send it to: Weapon Zero Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Deadline is May 31, 1996.

Houston, We Have Legal Text

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Top Cow Productions and their immediate families or Elsie, the Borden cow. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip, telephone number with area code and your answers to the three questions on the official entry form, a standard postcard or a 3-by-5-inch index card. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: Weapon Zero Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. There is no second silly-ass quip here. Ha! Gotcha! **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by May 31, 1996.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected by random drawing from among all properly completed entries by Wizard Press. Drawing will take place on June 17, 1996.

For a list of winners, available after June 17, 1996, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Weapon Zero Winners, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Weapon Zero Entry Form!

DEADLINE IS MAY 31, 1996!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

Answer 3 _____

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by Jon Warren

MARVEL & DC BOTH WIN

The companies printed plenty of them, and now even the second printings are out, but the *Marvel vs. DC* mini-series is still hotter than anything we've seen in a long while. First printings of issue #1 are steadily inching up in value according to reports from our network of retailers, and issue #2 sold out nationwide, prompting speculation that it too will be moving up in price soon. And early reports show that issue #3 (featuring the big battles) is fast on the way of selling exactly like its predecessors.

ABSOLUTE PREACHER

Fans of the sizzling-hot *Preacher* series have picked up on the fact that the "first appearance" of Jesse Custer is in *Absolute Vertigo*, the one-shot DC showcase issue from 1995 which predated *Preacher* #1. This book previewed the first four pages from *Preacher* #1. Considering the heat that the series has generated of late, Jesse's debut looks like a bargain compared to the current series prices.

Also, fans of *Preacher* might be interested in checking out *Hellblazer* #60 and #61. If you look closely, it appears as if you are seeing the first appearance and creation of an unnamed heavenly force that sounds a lot like that of Genesis, who starts the mess that's going on in *Preacher*. Meanwhile, prices on *Preacher* just keep heading north.

ONE RARE LADY

We're still seeing strong demand for Eternity Comics' *Evil Ernie* #1, the first appearance of Lady Death, probably because it's one of those books that many collectors are still missing in their collections. It's very, very scarce, folks; lots of Lady Death fans would be more than happy to pay the current price, but the book just doesn't turn up that often. Retailers tell us that when they do locate a copy, it sells quickly in the $100-$140 range.

The "showdown of the century," *Marvel vs. DC*, is becoming one of the hottest books of the year

The Quick List — What's Hot in the Comic Book Market

• **MARVEL VS. DC**—The hottest recent release right now. There's lots of fan interest in the merging of the two universes. February's Amalgam Comics are adding even more fuel to the fire.

• **LOGAN**—The prestige format one-shot (see right) is a huge hit with Wolvie fans. Retailers report that they are sold out and having difficulty re-ordering. Low supply, high demand: We all know what that means.

• **PREACHER**—The hottest ongoing series in the market today. Its compelling storyline has fans scrambling to build a complete collection, which isn't easy to do because the early issues were overlooked and underordered.

• **SHI**—Still enjoying the limelight and the excitement of the Bad Girl craze. Prices are stable and demand is currently strong. Tucci has a lot of loyal fans who appreciate the quality story inside the covers.

• **LADY DEATH**—Even as the heat surrounding the Bad Girl genre begins to cool ever so slightly, enough new fans are coming into the market to keep the demand for back issues at a steady pace.

• **GEN^{13}**—Demand is still strong for this hot Image title, but with the plethora of Image books hitting the stands, some fans are becoming overwhelmed.

• **WITCHBLADE**—Definitely one to watch. This Image product is a surprise hit.

• **THE X-FILES**—The rabid success of the TV series continues to create a ready-made audience for the comic series, and anything else with the X-Files logo on it.

• **DAWN**—Joe Linsner's unique style keeps this mini-series on an upward move—be sure to grab the issues before their prices go sky-high.

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST WRITERS

1. **Peter David** — *Hulk, Aquaman, Marvel vs. DC* (Al Ortega)
2. **Neil Gaiman** — *Sandman* (Al Ortega)
3. **Kurt Busiek** — *Astro City, Untold Tales of Spider-Man* (Al Ortega)
4. **Mark Waid** — *Captain America, X-Men* (Rob Martin)
5. **Chuck Dixon** — *Robin, Detective Comics*
6. **Ron Marz** — *Green Lantern, Marvel vs. DC* (J. Schuyler)
7. **Garth Ennis** — *Preacher, Hitman*
8. **Scott Lobdell** — *Generation X, Uncanny X-Men* (J. Schuyler)
9. **Dan Jurgens** — *Sensational Spider-Man*, upcoming: *Teen Titans* (Al Ortega)
10. **Karl Kesel** — *Adventures of Superman, Superboy*

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS

1. **Todd McFarlane** — *Spawn* (Al Ortega)
2. **Joe Madureira** — *Uncanny X-Men* (Gabe Palacio)
3. **Jim Lee** — *Gen*, upcoming: *Fantastic Four* (Al Ortega)
4. **J. Scott Campbell** — *Gen*
5. **Billy Tucci** — *Shi*
6. **Joe Quesada** — *Ash* (Al Ortega)
7. **Alex Ross** — upcoming: *Kingdom Come* (Al Ortega)
8. **Joe Linsner** — *Dawn*
9. **Greg Capullo** — *Spawn*
10. **Chris Bachalo** — *Death: The Time of Your Life*, upcoming: *Generation X* (Al Ortega)

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST WRITERS AND ARTISTS LISTS ARE DERIVED FROM A NATIONWIDE RETAILER SURVEY.

WIZARD'S UP & COMING CREATOR

CARY NORD

The new penciler of *Daredevil*, Nord and writer Karl Kesel will return the popular character to his roots. His depiction of DD is so cool that his art is being used in all the DD ads for Marvel. *DD* editor James Felder says, "Cary has a very unique style; he has one foot in the world of comics and one foot in the real world—which is a special thing you don't usually see."

THE LEE-LIEFELD TIME BOMB

Talk about creating some excitement: Fans are breathlessly awaiting the work of Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld on the Marvel titles they will relaunch in September (Lee on *Fantastic Four* and *Iron Man*, Liefeld on *Captain America* and *The Avengers*). Early indications are that these will hit the market rolling.

COUNTDOWN TO *WOLVIE* #100

Wolverine is always a bestseller, but the current storyline counting down to March's landmark 100th issue has fans excited like never before. What's going to happen to Wolvie? Could he finally be regaining his adamantium bones and claws? Fans everywhere wanna know. You know what that means—HOT! A word of advice: Get to your store early before these completely sell out. Could be one of the hottest books of the year.

DEODATO GIVES AVENGERS A BOOST

Mike Deodato Jr.'s work on *Avengers* has been thrilling collectors for a while now, giving the title a well-deserved boost in popularity. Prices have moved up accordingly. Deodato's first work on the title, issue #380 (above), has been hopping, as have the issues from #384 to #394. And with Rob Liefeld taking over the title, who's to say that Deodato (who draws *Glory* for Liefeld's Extreme Studios) won't continue on the book? (As well as *Thor*, which Deodato is also livening up these days.)

MARKET WATCHERS

Letters to the Price Guide

We can't print all the letters we get, so if you want an answer to your question, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope along with your letter. We still can't guarantee an answer, but you'll have a much better chance of getting a response.

Q: My question deals with *The Tick* #2. I've heard there's an ultra-rare edition of this comic, and I wonder if it's the one I own. Mine does not say "Special Edition," and does not state anything about being part of a multiple printing in the indicia. It also does *not* have a die-cut cover. The only copyright date in the book is September 1988. What issue do I own and what is it worth?

S. Corhouse
Glen Falls, NY

A: I spoke to Bob Polio at New England Comics, publisher of *The Tick*, and he said if the book has red, yellow and orange flames and no die-cut on the cover, then that's the ultra-rare edition, of which only a few hundred were made. You should find a blank white box on the inside front cover, too. All the later printings (like the one above) are not die-cut and the colors of the flames are different. Bob says the ultra-rare edition sells for around $125—hope you've got it.

Q: I have a *Prime vs. Hulk* #0 Super Premium Edition, and I'd like to know how much it's worth. Oh, yeah, it's also signed.

J. McClure
Virginia Beach, VA

A: Those wacky guys at American Entertainment have been publishing all kinds of special editions, including the serial-numbered *X-Files* set and the *Prime vs. Hulk* book. The latter book came out as a regular edition at $9.95, with a signed Premium Edition for $39.95. That's what they're worth.

Q: I can't find anyone who can give me a price on this one. It's a *Marvel Collector's Edition*, with the cover saying "Together for the First Time, Spider-Man, Captain America, The Incredible Hulk and Spider-Woman in the Secret of the Power Crown." It was given away free at 7-11 stores in 1981.

J. Wintrak
Madras, OR

A: I'm printing this one so I can say once again that giveaways rarely have any value. Hey, they were *given away*, for pete's sake. Sure, a few exceptions exist, like the 1993 *X-Men at the State Fair* giveaway, but they usually aren't worth more than a buck, tops.

Q: In *X-Men Annual* #14, Gambit appears on seven pages in 14 panels, and says something in 10 word balloons. What does it take for a character to be considered a guest star? Does he have to appear on every page?

P. Leone
San Antonio, TX

A: Generally, a character is considered to make a *guest* or *co-starring appearance* when he or she is featured throughout the book. A *feature appearance* is one where a character shows up for a few pages or panels, and has a significant effect on the action. A *cameo appearance* is one in which a character appears for one or two panels only.

Q: I was shocked to find a four-pack of Marvel comics at a Wal-Mart, containing *X-Men Adventures* #1, *Wolverine* #50, *X-Men* #1E, and *The New Mutants* #87, all first editions. I paid $4.97—less than cover price! Why is Marvel distributing such rare and valuable comics at such a low price when they could be getting much more?

B. Krueger
Muscoda, WI

A: Good question. This just goes to show that comics *can* sell for less than cover price—even collectible ones. Actually, Marvel's not the ones doing the distributing, it's Treat Collectibles. They have a deal with Wal-Mart to sell collectible comics in all of the chain's stores across the country. How they are able to sell these comics for less than cover price is a mystery to me.

I hate to say it, dear friends, but it's time to go. We'll be back next month with more of the answers you need to know.

—Jon Warren
The Market Watcher

Got questions? Send 'em to:
Market Watchers
c/o Jon Warren
P. O. Box 2512
Chattanooga, TN 37409
Or send e-mail directly to the guy himself:
JonRWarren@aol.com

BAD GIRL REPORT

Cry for Dawn may be the hottest of the Bad Girl books right now. It's also the toughest to find. Early issues are scarce and bringing in top prices. The Bad Girl craze has cooled a bit according to some retailers, but is still definitely influencing several of the fastest-selling back issues. *Shi*, *Lady Death*, the *Vampirella* titles, *Angela*, *Dawn* and *Avengelyne* are the current leaders in this category. Of these, *Dawn* (starring *Cry for Dawn*'s heroine) seems to have the most going for it, as retailers report that the awesome art by Joe Linsner and a really good storyline combine to make this more than just another "pretty woman" book.

YOU ASKED FOR IT, YOU GOT IT

We've added a new listing for the *Wizard* #1/2 offers and the *Wizard* mini-comics. Now, under those headings, there is a complete checklist of all the #1/2 offer books and the mini-comics. Hey, we aim to please. **W**

Jon Warren lives in Chattanooga, Tennessee with his wife and three kids. Oh, yeah, he wears overalls.

WIZARD® TOP 100

Marvel vs. DC #3

The highest-ordered comic books for the month of FEBRUARY.

Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff, and working off the data supplied by comic book retailers across the country, the following is a listing of the highest-ordered comics for February. Check out the column on the right for an explanation of this month's standout books (listed in **boldface type**).

1. **Marvel vs. DC #3 (Marvel/DC)**
2. **Spawn #44 (Image)**
3. X-Men #51 (Marvel)
4. Uncanny X-Men #331 (Marvel)
5. **Spawn #45 (Image)**
6. **Gen[13]: Ordinary Heroes #1 (Image)**
7. Spawn/WildC.A.T.s #2 (Image)
8. **Generation X #14 (Marvel)**
9. X-Man #14 (Marvel)
10. X-Force #53 (Marvel)
11. Cable #30 (Marvel)
12. X-Factor #121 (Marvel)
13. **Death: The Time of Your Life #1 (DC)**
14. Storm #3 (Marvel)
15. Amazing Spider-Man #410 (Marvel)
16. X-Men: Askani'Son #3 (Marvel)
17. Excalibur #96 (Marvel)
18. Shi #8 (Crusade)
19. Sensational Spider-Man #3 (Marvel)
20. Incredible Hulk #440 (Marvel)
21. **Fantastic Four #411 (Marvel)**
22. **Thor #497 (Marvel)**
23. **Foxfire #1 (Malibu)**
24. **All New Exiles #5 (Malibu)**
25. **The Night Man/Gambit #1 (Malibu)**
26. Spider-Man #66 (Marvel)
27. Batman #529 (DC)
28. WildC.A.T.s #27 (Image)
29. Superman #111 (Image)
30. Detective Comics #696 (DC)
31. **Action Comics #720 (DC)**
32. Superman: The Man of Steel #55 (DC)
33. Witchblade #4 (Image)
34. The X-Files #15 (Topps)
35. Tomoe #2 (Crusade)
36. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #49 (DC)
37. Professor X and the X-Men #6 (Marvel)
38. WetWorks #15 (Image)
39. **Weapon Zero #1 (Image)**
40. **Sin City: That Yellow Bastard #1 (D.H.)**
41. Dawn #4 (Sirius)
42. Robin #28 (DC)
43. Star Wars: Splinter of the M.E. #2 (D.H.)
44. Catwoman #32 (DC)
45. X-Nation 2099 #2 (Marvel)
46. Cyberforce #20 (Image)
47. Azrael #16 (DC)
48. Horseman #1 (Crusade)
49. The Batman Chronicles #4 (DC)
50. S. Wars: X-Wing—R. S.: P. Affair #1 (D.H.)
51. Wonder Woman #108 (DC)
52. Green Lantern #73 (DC)
53. **The Maxx #23 (Image)**
54. DefCon 4 #1 (Image)
55. X-Men 2099 #31 (Marvel)
56. Flash #112 (DC)
57. Avengelyne: Deadly Sins #2 (Max.)
58. Hitman #1 (DC)
59. Grifter #10 (Image)
60. Team 7 III: Dead Reckoning #2 (Image)
61. Superboy #26 (DC)
62. Glory #0 (Image)
63. Cyberpunx #1 (Image)
64. S. Wars: Jabba the Hutt—Betrayal #1 (D.H.)
65. **What If? #84 (Marvel)**
66. Backlash #17 (Image)
67. Prophet #5 (Image)
68. Glory Lingerie Special #1 (Image)
69. Ripclaw #4 (Image)
70. **The X-Files Comic Digest #2 (Topps)**
71. Untold Tales of Spider-Man #8 (Marvel)
72. 21 #2 (Image)
73. StormWatch #33 (Image)
74. Lady Pendragon #1 (Maximum)
75. **Preacher #13 (DC)**
76. Savage Dragon #26 (Image)
77. Man-Bat #3 (DC)
78. Bone #23 (Image)
79. Sovereign Seven #10 (DC)
80. Spider-Man 2099 #42 (Marvel)
81. Adventures of the X-Men #1 (Marvel)
82. Deathblow #25 (Image)
83. Iron Man #327 (Marvel)
84. Maximage #3 (Image)
85. Aquaman #19 (DC)
86. Vamps: Hollywood & Vein #3 (DC)
87. Captain America #450A (Marvel)
88. Youngblood #5 (Image)
89. Dart #1 (Image)
90. Daredevil #351 (Marvel)
91. Green Goblin #7 (Marvel)
92. Bloodpool #1 (Image)
93. New Warriors #70 (Marvel)
94. **The Books of Magic #23 (DC)**
95. Tarzan vs. Predator at the E.C. #2 (D.H.)
96. Lethal #1 (Image)
97. Evil Ernie: Straight to Hell #5 (Chaos!)
98. **Ghost #11 (Dark Horse)**
99. Cybernary #4 (Image)
100. Warchild #1 (Maximum)

AT THE TOP:

While the third *Marvel vs. DC* issue—with the outcomes of the long-awaited hero battles—hit #1 as expected, *Spawn* #44 surprisingly toppled both of the main X-titles. This is apparently due to the intro of a warrior angel named Tiffany, who may become as hot as Angela when she hits stores in the near future as an action figure. The month's other issue, #45, came in at its usual area, as Gen[13]'s new mini-series grabbed the regular title's numbers. Generation X's February TV-movie hasn't benefited the comic series that much, although #8 is still a strong ranking, and the film's long-term effects on orders are still unknown. The first issue of Death's second mini-series charted seven spots higher than last month's final *Sandman* issue (#75), and beat out all the other regular DC books this month, proving the power of the Vertigo line.

IN THE MIDDLE:

The work of writer Bill Messner-Loebs and artist Mike Deodato Jr. on *Thor* has brought the 30-plus-year-old character much market attention, and a veritable sales resurrection for his book (it was at #53 last month, people). *FF* made one of February's largest moves, flying from #55 in January to #21 this month—fans must be eagerly anticipating Jim Lee's takeover of the team. Malibu's newest title, *Foxfire*, placed at a respectable #23, directly followed by two mutant-related issues, showing that it's not yet over for the hanging-in company. Meanwhile, it *is* over for Lois and Clark, but the engagement-breaking *Action* #720 failed to garner record-breaking orders. Two new series starring characters coming off of past mini-series—*Weapon Zero* and *Sin City*—scored very well this month.

IN THE SECOND HALF:

Weirdness is in, as *The Maxx* continually rises in Top 100 Land (probably helped by December's Gen[13] crossover, writer Alan Moore's work on issue #21 and the hit TV show), while fans are going wild for *Preacher* and *The Books of Magic*, two more solid Vertigo offerings. A mystery surrounds another weird product, Topps' *The X-Files Comic Digest*, which should've placed higher than #70. What if *What If?* became all-X-Men? The answer appears to be huge sales for the once-struggling book: It jumped 34 points from January's spot. *Ghost* floated onto the chart this month, as she wins over new fans.

ATTENTION COMIC BOOK RETAILERS:

If you're a retailer who would like to participate in our compiling of the Wizard Top 100 (and be a candidate for special prizes), please write to us at the address below.

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COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

THIS TIME, OUR CBIQ SYSTEM GRADES YOUR TOTALLY USELESS COMIC KNOWLEDGE AGAINST TOTALLY CUTE BUT EXCEPTIONALLY ANNOYING ANDROID SIDEKICKS. THE HIGHER THE SCORE, THE MORE YOU WANNA USE A WRENCH AND BALL-PEEN HAMMER TO SADISTICALLY EXPLORE THE INNARDS OF THESE WISE-ASS ROBOTS. LOOK IN THIS ISSUE'S BULLPEN FOR THE ANSWERS.

SCORE	RANK
0-4	**Twikki:** Biddi-biddi-biddi, this Buck Rogers robot bites. I say it's high time for some robot midget tossing.
5-14	**Microtron, the Micronauts' R2D2 rip-off robot:** Whoever named him Microtron never saw his attachable drill apparatus.
15-19	**Dynomutt, the Dog Wonder:** Any bionic dog that would consistently call me "BF" (instead of Blue Falcon) would be seriously asking for it.
20	**H.E.R.B.I.E. the Robot:** H.E.R.B.I.E., Schmerbie! Where the hell was the Human Torch?!

HEY! Despite hordes of clones, multiple variant covers and too many zero issues, some people still buy comics. Therefore, our lives are validated by doing another edition of the C.B.I.Q. So, as a corporate tool, we command you to quiz yourself and your friends. NOW!!

1. Which character has never taken up the "mantle of the bat" in the pages of the Batman titles?
A) Jean Paul Valley, a.k.a. Azrael
B) Dick Grayson, a.k.a. Nightwing
C) Hannibal Hawkes, a.k.a. Nighthawk
D) Anton Knight, a.k.a. Night-Slayer

2. Who was the mutant-hating creator of the X-Men's robot enemies, the Sentinels?
A) Moses Magnum
B) Dr. Bolivar Trask
C) Dr. Curt Connors
D) Magneto

3. Who is not a supporting character on the highly rated "Krusty the Clown Show"?
A) Mr. Genie
B) Tina Ballerina
C) Gabbo
D) Corporal Punishment

4. What did that ol' romantic from Dark Horse, X, do after he gave villainess Hothouse Rose a rose?
A) He asked her to be his crimefighting partner and lover.
B) He slashed her across the eye, tied her up and dropped her off at the local police station.
C) He winked at her with his one good eye and said, "One rose is a warning, but two roses are a commitment, baby."
D) He did what any psychotic gentleman would have done and snapped her neck like a twig.

5. Why did alien beings introduce the Nu Gene into the bodies of the members of the NewMen?
A) So that the NewMen would develop superpowers and then could be harvested as super-slaves.
B) To unleash a deadly virus throughout the bodies of the NewMen, which would spread across the Earth, killing all mankind and leaving the planet ripe for conquest.
C) The Nu Gene would mutate those who come into contact with it into aliens, thus making any plans for the invasion of Earth superfluous.
D) They wanted to give the NewMen powers via the Nu Gene, so that they'd become the universe's guardians.

6. In the *Crisis on Infinite Earths* maxi-series, which villain did the whacked-out image of the Barry Allen Flash appear in front of first?
A) Reverse-Flash
B) Anti-Monitor
C) The Joker
D) Mirror Master

7. Dr. Strange's trusted butler and disciple is...
A) Jarvis.
B) Wong.
C) Alfred.
D) Mr. French.

8. What does Event Comics superstar Ash do for a job as Ashley Quinn?
A) Police officer
B) Fireman
C) Government special agent
D) Certified public accountant

9. On the "Super Friends" cartoon, what was the name of Marvin and Wendy's pet?
A) Wonder Monkey
B) Wonder Dog
C) Wonder Mutt
D) Wonder Man

10. Which superpowered siblings can call Shazam, the wizard, father?
A) Captain Marvel and Mary Marvel
B) Obsidian and Jade
C) Quicksilver and the Scarlet Witch
D) Satanus and Blaze

11. What Avengers villain recently revealed himself to be responsible for Henry Pym's nervous breakdowns?
A) Kang
B) Tony Stark
C) Space Phantom
D) Vision

12. What mission has Lady Death entrusted Evil Ernie with?
A) Evil Ernie is to destroy any and all forms of evil that he may encounter.
B) He is to destroy all life on the planet.
C) He is to kill all supernaturally created monsters.
D) He is to kill Evil Urkel from ABC's super-sitcom "Family Matters."

13. X-Force's Boomer recently changed her name to...
A) Destructo.
B) Volcana.
C) Meltdown.
D) Big Boomer.

14. What happened to the planet Oa, home of those blue freaks, the Guardians?
A) On a murderous rampage, it was destroyed by Hal Jordan.
B) In an attempt to stop Hal Jordan from becoming too powerful, it was destroyed by Kyle Rayner.
C) In a battle with Hal Jordan, Sinestro's yellow power ring overloaded and exploded, causing the planet to be sucked into a wormhole that was created when the yellow energy nullified the planet's green energy.
D) It was invaded by those world-demolishing Khunds.

15. We all know Peter Parker's Uncle Ben was killed by that mean ol' burglar, but just what was the jerk looking for at the Parker home?
A) The secret identity of Spider-Man
B) A gangster's stash of millions of dollars
C) A mystical amulet with strange powers
D) Nothing in particular—just any cash and valuables the Parkers had

16. What do Image's Mighty Man, Alpha Flight's Sasquatch and the "main man," Lobo, have in common?
A) They belong to groups that have been funded by the C.I.A. or other U.S. governmental intelligence agencies.
B) They all have powers that are mystical in nature.
C) They all suffer or have suffered from agoraphobia.
D) They have shown their feminine side by taking on the physical form of (gulp!) women at one time or another.

17. This 19th century gun-slinging kid hung out with Hawkeye and the Avengers in the 20th century:
A) Two-Gun Kid.
B) Kid Colt.
C) Rawhide Kid.
D) Cisco Kid.

18. In the Image Universe, Colonel Bravo is the father of...
A) Supreme.
B) Shaft.
C) Chapel.
D) Badrock.

19. Which of the following Justice League members was *not* a member of Infinity Inc.?
A) Nuklon
B) Obsidian
C) Power Girl
D) Blue Devil

20. If an insanely violent Dan Rather could grow to a height of 50 feet and shoot deathrays from his eyes, who would have the best chance of defeating him?
A) An elastic-bodied Jerry Lewis with the ability to form forcefields
B) Dee Snider, ex-lead singer of Twisted Sister, in possession of a single Nega-Band and the Eye of Agamotto
C) Goldie Hawn, former "Sock-it-to-Me" girl turned serious actress, with an organic steel body and a large iron mace
D) Secretary of State Warren Christopher in a feral state of mind, with freeze-breath and the ability to channel sound into plasma blasts

W

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CHARACTER PROFILE: SUPERMAN

BY MATTHEW BRADY

VITAL STATS

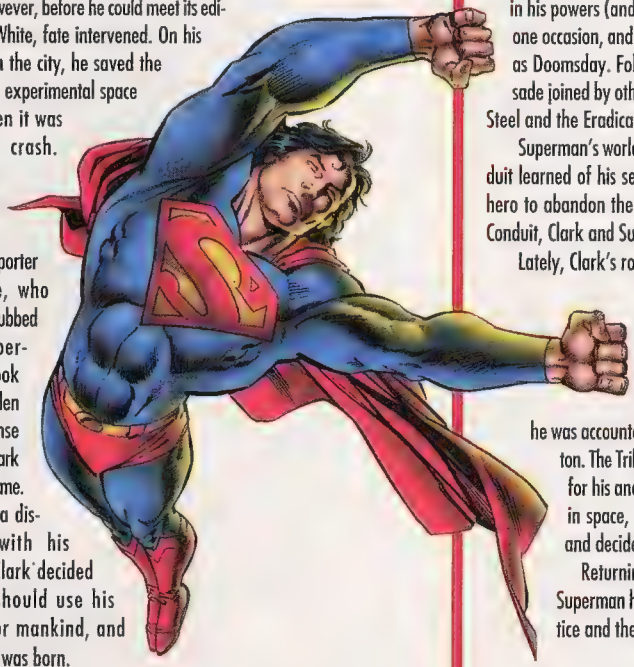
REAL NAME: (Kryptonian) Kal-El, (Earth) Clark Kent
AGE: around 30
HEIGHT: 6' 3"
WEIGHT: 225 lbs.
HAIR COLOR: Black
EYE COLOR: Blue
FIRST APPEARANCE: (original version) *Action Comics* #1 in 1938; (modern version) *The Man of Steel* #1 in 1986
TITLES CURRENTLY APPEARING IN: *Action Comics, Superman, The Adventures of Superman, Superman: The Man of Steel* and *Superman: The Man of Tomorrow* (DC Comics)
ENEMIES: Lex Luthor, Brainiac, The Cyborg, Mongul, Doomsday, Parasite

ORIGIN

The sole survivor of a planetary catastrophe, the infant Kal-El was rocketed from his home planet Krypton to Earth by his parents. Landing in a field in Smallville, Kan., baby Kal-El was adopted by Jonathan and Martha Kent, who named him Clark. Under the yellow sun of Earth, Clark gained powers far beyond those of mortal men, including increased strength, invulnerability and flight.

Unaware of his true legacy, Clark moved to the city of Metropolis to seek his fortune and try his hand at reporting for the *Daily Planet*. However, before he could meet its editor Perry White, fate intervened. On his first day in the city, he saved the crew of an experimental space plane when it was about to crash. Among the crew of the plane was ace reporter Lois Lane, who promptly dubbed him "Superman." Shook by the sudden and immense publicity, Clark returned home.

After a discussion with his parents, Clark decided that he should use his powers for mankind, and Superman was born.



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

Since his appearance in Metropolis, Superman has found himself to be the idol of millions and the role model for a new generation of superheroes. His appearance has also made him the target of many enemies, from the ruthless businessman Lex Luthor and the psychotic Toyman, to iron-fisted warlord Mongul and the evil supernatural force known as Satanus.

Superman thinks of himself as Clark Kent first and Superman second, and as Clark Kent, he has a very successful career as a journalist for the *Daily Planet*, and an occasional best-selling novelist. A one-time rival of Lois Lane in the journalism world, their competition has turned into love, and the two are engaged to be married.

Soon after their engagement, Superman revealed his identity to Lois, connecting the two even more. Clark himself has learned of his Kryptonian heritage, and has sought out information about his true parents and the planet that was Krypton on more than one occasion.

Superman's adventures have included time travel, memory loss, a self-imposed exile in space, a loss of his powers, an uncontrollable increase in his powers (and size), leading Earth's heroes into battle on more than one occasion, and his apparent death at the hands of the creature known as Doomsday. Following his resurrection, Superman has found his crusade joined by others who have adopted his mantle: Supergirl, Superboy, Steel and the Eradicator.

Superman's world recently came under attack when the supervillain Conduit learned of his secret identity and targeted his loved ones, forcing the hero to abandon the identity of Clark Kent for a time. With the death of Conduit, Clark and Superman returned to life as normal.

Lately, Clark's romantic life has been shaken by the appearance of the Alpha Centurion, a spacefaring soldier of ancient Rome who fancies himself a rival for Lois' affection, and the return of Lori Lemaris, a mermaid who was Clark's first true love. Making Superman's life even more difficult was the decision of a galactic Tribunal that he was accountable, by virtue of bloodline, for the destruction of Krypton. The Tribunal initially ruled that Superman should be put to death for his ancestor's crime, but after a lengthy adventure on the run in space, the alien judges were convinced of his noble nature, and decided that he should not face punishment.

Returning to Earth and reunited with his family and friends, Superman has again taken up his never-ending battle for truth, justice and the American way.

UPCOMING HIGHLIGHTS

"It's going to be a very stressful time for both Clark and Lois following their breakup and cancellation of their engagement in *Action Comics* #720," says Superman editor KC Carlson. "Both are going to try to work things out, but it's going to get very complicated as Lois dives into her work to regain her position as Metropolis' number one reporter, and Clark is named temporary editor-in-chief of the *Daily Planet* following Perry White's sudden illness."

But Carlson teases that there are plans for a wedding between a certain "L" and "C" on the horizon. "I won't give details, but it will change a lot in the books, when it happens in *Superman: The Man of Tomorrow* #5.

"We're also going to focus on the supporting cast a lot," Carlson says. "They're going to become part of Superman and Clark's life in a very big way."

As for the rest of '96, Carlson tells readers to plan for the return of a certain bottled city, a rebuilding of the Fortress of Solitude in the Antarctic, and a mysterious "Villain War," which will appear periodically in all the Superman books throughout the remainder of the year.

RECOMMENDED HIGHLIGHTS

For some choice Superman books, check out these, as picked by some of the Superman creative staff.

Dan Jurgens, writer of *Superman*, recommends:

- ***Superman/Aliens***—"I like this because it puts Superman in a different milieu, with a threat that's very deadly. As a package, I was pleased with it on all levels."
- ***The Unauthorized Biography of Lex Luthor***—"It was a really different book that looked at Superman's biggest enemy. It had a whole different feel to it."

Karl Kesel, writer of *The Adventures of Superman*, recommends:

- ***Superman* #9**—"The back-up story was the definitive Luthor story. In seven pages, it encapsulated Luthor perfectly."
- ***Adventures of Superman* #522**—"The story of how Metropolis came back after Luthor leveled it. I think I nicely captured the feeling of Metropolis as a city, and its citizens."

David Michelinie, writer of *Action Comics*, recommends:

- ***Superman* #75**—"Simply, the key issue of the modern era of Superman. It definitively shows who he is, and how far he'd go for what he believes in."
- ***Action Comics* #700**—"The destruction of Metropolis. This issue showcased the cast really well, and it's a great chance for people to get a feel for who these people are."

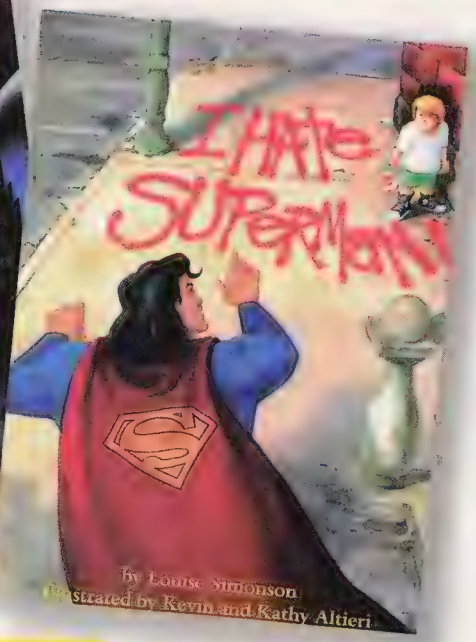
SIMILAR TASTES

If Superman is to your liking, Carlson recommends that you check out other books featuring heroes that fight for truth, justice and all that other stuff: *Captain America, The Power of Shazam!, Legion of Super-Heroes, Legionnaires* and *Bone.*

Matthew Brady, who did a profile of Wolverine last issue, is a truly mild-mannered reporter.

JUNK DRAWER

Little bits of everything that we couldn't stretch into a full-page newsy thing



Superman & Batman Children's Books

FUN WITH BATMAN AND SUPERMAN

See Superman fly. See Batman watch Superman fly. See Joker grin. Grin, Joker, grin. Look out Dr. Seuss, 'cause Little Brown presents two new children's storybooks featuring Batman and Superman aimed at kids ages seven and up.

Batman: The Joker's Apprentice, written by Chuck Dixon with art by John Calmette, is about an eight-year-old boy who loves telling jokes and playing pranks. So naturally, he chooses the Joker as his hero! (Is this kid going to need therapy or what?) He soon learns, however, that this probably wasn't the brightest of ideas.

I Hate Superman, written by Louise Simonson and drawn by Kevin and Kathy Altieri, features a young lad who has two heroes: his brother and Superman. But things get a little complicated when Superman's forced to arrest the kid's brother! (Looks like Supes just lost a fan!)

Both books, retailing for $13.95 each, come in full-color hardcover (just like those Little Golden Books) and can be found in bookstores everywhere.

Madman Magnet Set

COLOR ME GOOD

Forget those finger paints. Put away those crayons. Colorize 2.0 is here. The new upgrade by DS Design allows you to colorize any scanned illustrations, clip art, cartoons, logos and even comics.

Colorize 2.0 is a computer program specifically designed for coloring line art. Any user of Adode's Photoshop, Illustrator or Streamline, Macromedia's Freehand, Fractal Painter, Deneba's Canvas, or other qualifying image editing applications can purchase Colorize 2.0 for $149. (Hey, that's actually pretty affordable for a computer program!) It's currently available only for the Macintosh, but a Windows 95 version is scheduled for release in May. Call DS Design at 800-745-4037 for more information.

MAGNETS? ARE YOU MAD, MAN?

Looking for the perfect magnet to hang that report card on the fridge? Well, Graphitti Designs' new Madman magnet set provides the perfect thing to take people's eyes off those not-so-great marks! This premiere magnet set features three different magnets of Mike Allred's Madman and his friends. Look for it, retailing for $5.95 a set, at a comic shop near you.

WHAT A PAIR!

There are two new statues out there that're bound to liven up your coffee table and make any G.I. Joe jealous. Moore Creations has released a Lady Death porcelain statue as well as a Grifter statue. Lady Death is limited to 10,000 pieces and comes in its own full-color box. Sporting her

high heels and a flowing cape, this seven-inch statue looks incredible! The Grifter statue features the popular WildC.A.T.s marksman with his guns a-blazing behind a shot-up wall. Lady Death retails for $45 with the Grifter statue going for $150.

QUEST FOR PHONES

The newest edition to the phone card phenomenon is the second of four Elfquest cards from Dynamic Forces.

The $10 phone card—with 15 minutes of phone time—features the cover to *Elfquest: Shards* #16 with artwork by Elfquest artist and co-creator Wendy Pini. So while you enjoy this baby for its art, you can also call up mom and tell her how much you love her. (Aww, what a good kid you are!) Look for your favorite elves to hit stores this April.

Spider-Man Model Kit

Thing Model Kit

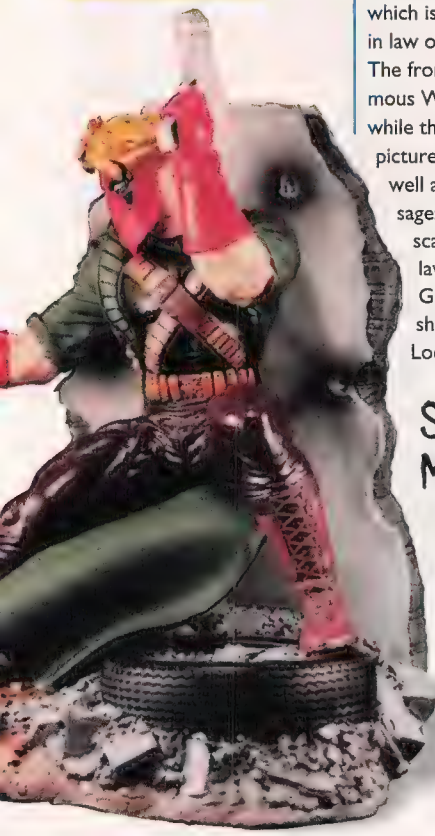
Silver Surfer Model Kit

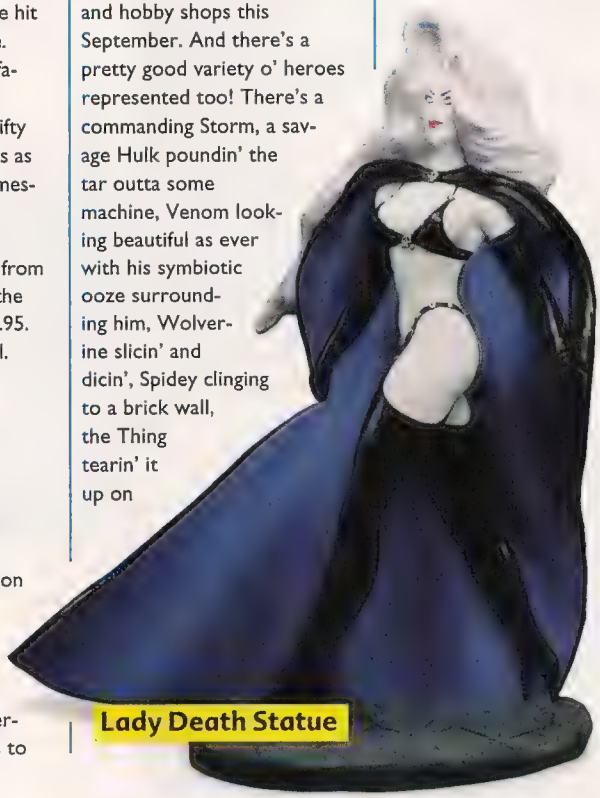
A T-SHIRT TO SUE FOR

Just what everybody needs: a T-shirt with a couple of lawyers on it. But before you get your briefs all botched up, these Counselors of the Macabre are no ordinary legal eagles. Wolff & Byrd, from creator Batton Lash, have finally come out with their own T-shirt, which is sure to be a huge hit in law offices everywhere. The front features the infamous Wolff & Byrd logo, while the back sports a nifty picture of the counselors as well as the important message: "My lawyers are scarier than your lawyers!" Available from Graphitti Designs, the shirt retails for $16.95. Look for it this April.

SOME MODEL HEROES!

Hoo hah! Bring on those rainy days, 'cause now you can build your very own superheroes! Thanks to Toy Biz, a whole slew of neato lookin' model kits will be hitting your favorite toy and hobby shops this September. And there's a pretty good variety o' heroes represented too! There's a commanding Storm, a savage Hulk poundin' the tar outta some machine, Venom looking beautiful as ever with his symbiotic ooze surrounding him, Wolverine slicin' and dicin', Spidey clinging to a brick wall, the Thing tearin' it up on Yancey Street, Silver Surfer struttin' his stuff on his infamous board, and another Spider-Man ready to web off on another adventure. These kits are unpainted, so you'll have to develop your artistic skills as you put these kits together and bring these heroes to life. And heck, they'll only cost you about $10-$15 apiece, so start saving those dimes!


Grifter Statue


Lady Death Statue

JUNK DRAWER video games

by Steve Brown

MARVEL MAKES GOOD ON GAMES

Comic book fans, rejoice! The next generation systems are beginning to crank out the superhero games that you've been dreaming of. Whatever superhero games have come before, whatever crimes of the eye you've suffered and whatever disappointments you have experienced, it's all going to change. Marvel has made it a point to create better and more playable games (i.e., ones that will sell better), by restricting the number of licenses and raising the bar on the actual quality of the title. (Now there's an idea!) I've mentioned two of them here this month, but rest assured there are more on the way. I should have the skinny on a few of them next month.

SPIDER-MAN

Spider-Man: Web of Fire, Sega's new 32X cart, has been in development for well over a year now, and it certainly shows. *Wizard* was not supplied with a finished copy, but the eighty-percent-completed version was certainly good enough to merit early inclusion. *Web of Fire* is due out about the same time you're reading this and was put together by Blue Sky, the same company that programmed the greatest Genesis title of '95, *Vectorman*!

The title of this game is a bit erroneous, though, as it really should be called *Marvel Team-Up*, seeing as how Daredevil shares equal time with ol' Web-Head. Unfortunately, the villains are mostly lame: Hydra, The Eel, Dragon Man, and the completely contrived Thermite. The graphics, however, simply rule! The rendered landscapes and fabulous character animations make this side-scroller a special game for Spider-Fans.

As for the story, it seems New York is being reduced to rubble, as an incredible energy net is slowly crushing the Big Apple. It'll be "So long, New York," unless Spider-Man and Daredevil can reach the power spires that generate the net's weird web of electricity.

Also rumored to be in the works is a much-delayed X-Men 32X side-scroller. I played a skeleton version (only about ten-percent completed) about a year ago, and it was pretty cool. But the game is *still* early in development and no release date has been revealed yet.

X-MEN

Those of you who frequent arcades are already quite familiar with Capcom's ultra-radical X-Men standup fighter. Well, thanks to a joint venture between Acclaim and Capcom, *X-Men: Children of the Atom* will finally be coming home. To *your* home, that is! At this point, it looks like the

Spider-Man

Sega Saturn is the only place you'll find it, though.

Having played the arcade version quite extensively, I was blown away by the wonderful job Capcom has done graphically. And more importantly, Capcom has beautifully captured the sheer playability of the original. Video games have now gotten to the point were $5,000 machines can be duplicated to near perfection and played at home for a fraction of the price. Could your local arcade be going the way of the drive-in? It's certainly a possibility.

X-Men: Children of the Atom is a straight-forward, one-on-one fighting game and, of course, each character has his or her own strengths and weaknesses. Par for the course are special near-impossible moves unique to each mutant. Personally, I found the villains to be much more interesting to play—Silver Samurai and his lightning sword of death cut a swathe of victory like no other. Spiral, Omega Red, and a big hulking Sentinel round out the list of villains. (Though there's also supposedly a way to access Magneto through a bunch of codes.)

On the superhero side, the ferocity of Wolverine's beserker rage gives Logan the edge in most battles. Storm, Cyclops, Colossus, Gambit, Psylocke and the frozen-projectile-mad Iceman round off our good guys. This is the greatest comic book video game ever released and, needless to say, a must-purchase for all Saturn owners.

Casper

CASPER

Interplay is basing its new 3DO game on the recent hit Casper movie, opting for an adventure/strategy game that the entire family can enjoy. The same 3-D character models and voices of Casper and his uncles from the movie will be used in the game. Plus, in sequences created *exclusively* for the game, Casper and the ghostly trio will be voiced by their movie counterparts.

In the game, Casper himself will have a bunch of unique features including the ability to morph into various shapes and objects in order to solve puzzles. Casper will also be able to defy physics, as he travels through air vents and passageways to search the vastness of Whipstaff Manor. To win, the gamer must find pieces of the Lazarus machine, encountering all the familiar characters from the movie. Once Casper's search is completed and all the pieces are found, Casper may return to the land of the living. *Casper* should be available now for the PlayStation, 3DO and Sega Saturn.

X-Men

Wizard Press is coming to the SF Bay Area!

Meet WonderCon Special Guest Gareb Shamus—The Big Cheese!

WonderCon—April 26, 27 & 28—The Oakland Convention Center. Tickets available at BASS outlets and from many Bay Area comic shops. For more information call 510/464-1120 or check out the WonderCon Web site: http://www.insv.com/wondercon

What's Happening With Wizard??!!

Who decides what goes on each cover? How do they pick feature topics?
Is the guy who answers the letters really that rude?
Your Hosts: Gareb Shamus (Publisher & Big Cheese)
& Marty Stever (Sales & Marketing Guy)
1:00 pm, Saturday, April 27, The Calvin Simmons Ballroom
Free Wizard stuff for all attendees, plus great prizes for the best questions!

Comic Books Online

A meeting for Wizard World users, Web Surfers, and anyone online!
Your Host: Marty Stever
3:00 pm, Saturday, April 27, Room 208
Free Wizard stuff for all attendees, plus great prizes for the best comments!

What's Up With InQuest: The Guide to Collectible Card Games??!!

How do they come up with those prices, anyhow? Who says which games are hot? Is Rick Swan really insane? PS. Bring your Magic deck!
Your Host: Marty Stever
High Noon, Sunday April 28, The Calvin Simmons Ballroom
Free stuff for all attendees, plus great prizes for the best questions!

Meet special WonderCon guests Rob Liefeld, Kurt Busiek, Charles Vess, Jeff Smith, Chris Claremont, Dan Jurgens, and the legendary Will Eisner!

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bullpen

RECTAL HALITOSIS!

It would have killed a normal man.

It all started when Wizard Promotions & Publicity Manager Jim McLauchlin, in the middle of a conversation with Editor-in-Chief Pat McCallum regarding meat, stated that he could cook a meaner chili than McCallum. After the rest of the Wizard staff separated the two, the gauntlet was thrown down and the Chili-Off was on. Entered were: McLauchlin, McCallum, Editor Brian Cunningham, Copy Editor Andrew Kardon, Research Assistant Mike Fasolo, Production Director Douglas Goldstein and enough beans to put the fear of God into an atheist. With steaming bowls before them, the panel of Wizard judges shoveled spoonful after spoonful into their mouths, and after much deliberation (and gas expulsion), awarded the blue ribbon to Goldstein...only to strip him of the award seconds later when it was learned that he used canned chili. "People were just pissed my no-frills chili beat their homemade crap," he whined. "I was robbed!" First prize was then shifted to McCallum, who, upon receiving the award, dropped another bombshell: "Actually, I've never cooked chili before. Jim's chili must have really sucked." So what did Mr. McLauchlin have to say about being the first chili chef eliminated from the cookoff? "Yous rolls your dice and takes your chances. I brought manly chili with a serious spice, and the judges were either girls or girly-men."

KING PONG!

Not content to eat dead cow flesh mixed with beans, the Wizard Press gladiators are taking each other on in the first annual Wizard Ping-Pong Tournament—a sweaty, double-elimination bout with a prize of an all-you-can-eat/drinkfest at the best Mexican restaurant on the freakin' planet, El Bandido on Route 59 in Spring Valley, N.Y. With the competition already hot and heavy, early favorites are the aforementioned chili-hack Jim McLauchlin, *InQuest* Art Director Robin Ramos and Full Page's Eastern Accounts Manager Jason Kelley. We'll have the final four and the winner next month.

TOP TEN

Top 10 little-known duties of Alfred the Butler.

10. Slides Aunt Harriet's food tray through the slot into that boarded-up room upstairs.
9. Pays hookers "keep your mouth shut" money whenever Bruce gets a little too rough.
8. Helps Bruce build Xanadu. Estimated cost: No man can say.
7. Gets Chief O'Hara's drunken vomit stains out of the rug.
6. Washes "little Batman."
5. Visits orphanages on the prowl for handsome young wards, slips the headmasters a G-spot, gets the papers through for adoption, sells the brats to sweaty Brazilian men.
4. Keeps tabs on replacement sidekicks "just in case."
3. Unclogs the toilet after Sgt. Bullock visits the mansion.
2. Greases up the Batpole...the hard way.
1. Builds nipple things into the Bat-suit, three times harder, bigger and stronger than those on that "Batman Forever" costume.

MORT OF THE MONTH

RAINBOW RAIDER

Substance abuse and creating comic characters just don't mix. Combine the two and you just might end up with something like the Rainbow dillweed here. As a pre-Crisis Flash villain and a post-Crisis Captain Atom villain, this guy is the most colorful reason to support birth control we've ever seen. Born color-blind, Roy G. Bivolo was given a pair of "prisma-goggles" by his optometrist pop, which allowed him control over colored lights. Wow. Frustrated by his inability to make it as an artist, Roy turned to crime and had his ass handed to him repeatedly, which happens to most people named Roy.

MORT-O-METER:

ON SALE NOW

InQuest #13

Beneath the **sizzling cover spot-lighting *Magic: The Gathering's* Alliances expansion**, this month's *InQuest* delivers the goods with a behind-the-scenes look at the **new original-cast "Star Trek" CCG**, a Q & A with **fantasy artist Brom**, how to trade *Magic* cards with your friends and the first annual ***InQuest* World Records!** Toss in the **free *Magic: The Gathering* life counter** and a buttload of free game cards, and you gots a winnah!

More filling than Jim's chili and only **$3.99!**

CONTEST WINNERS

CHAOS!, *WIZARD* #52
Ricardo Castillo of Teresa, N.M.
SIMPSONS, #52
Aaron Glenn of Annapolis, Md.
CYBERFROG, #53
Below is the guy winner Bob Cook of Milwaukee, Wis. wants Cyberfrog to "smack silly"—his ex-roommate, Brad!

C.B.I.Q. ANSWERS

from page 178

1. C	6. C	11. A	16. D
2. B	7. B	12. B	17. A
3. C	8. B	13. C	18. B
4. D	9. B	14. B	19. D
5. A	10. D	15. B	20. B

WIZARD profile

Here's looking at...

RON MARZ

In Woodstock, N.Y., the Marz family recently added a little baby Marz. Six months later, Ron Marz is dealing with it. "Working with a baby in the house is a much slower process and there's a lot more interruptions," says the 30-year-old comic scribe. "But a lot of the interruptions are self-inflicted, because I look for any excuse to stop working and be with my son."

Finding excuses is tough for Marz these days. He's knee-deep in *Green Lantern*, about to take over *Superboy* (with issue #32), piloted the fortunes of the upcoming Batman/Aliens mini-series and has written the *Silver Surfer: Dangerous Artifacts* graphic novel due in April. To say he's in demand is to understate the obvious. Marz, for his part, is at a loss to explain it.

"I got lucky. I don't know why it's happening, but I certainly don't want to burst the bubble. My style is to get down to what makes the characters work and what makes them interesting, and to use those aspects to tell the story."

Ron Marz, born and raised in Kingston, N.Y., recalls, "I always had my head buried in a book," but that he was not a voracious comic reader. After graduating from Marist College with a degree in communications, Marz became a journalist for the local Kingston newspaper. But, during his six years chronicling the real world, Marz recalls not being too thrilled. "I always knew I was going to write, but journalism wasn't as much fun because I couldn't make stuff up."

Photo by J. Schuyler

Marz, in the meantime, had become friends with Jim Starlin, who eventually turned him onto the comic book path. "Jim sort of put the plate in front of me and said, 'You might want to think about this as a way to pay the rent.' "

Marz immediately jumped at the offer, and in short order, he co-wrote (with Starlin) parts of *Silver Surfer Annual* #3 and *Silver Surfer* #42 and #43 before going solo with *What If?* issues #22 and #27. When Starlin left *SS* after issue #50, Marz jumped in and guided that ship from #51 to #102 while managing *Thor* #460-#471 on the side. "I sort of figured out what I was doing after a while, and it was such a complete pleasure doing this stuff that it wasn't a hassle at all."

The writer also managed to work in six issues of *Secret Defenders* during this period, as well as stories for *Green Lantern Corps Quarterly* #4-#7. It was that latter gig that landed the writer an unexpected phone call one Friday night. "It was Kevin Dooley. DC had decided to take Green Lantern in a new direction, and they wanted me to be the guy to write it."

Marz took over with issue #48 and is currently up to ish #73, chronicling Kyle Rayner's adventures. He's also found time to do some *StormWatch* for Image, help get the "WildStorm Rising" concept off and running, handle issues #46-#50 of *X-O Manowar* for Valiant and do issues #1 and #3 of the *Marvel vs. DC* crossover series. Upcoming for Marz is a spinoff book out of the crossover that he is currently not at liberty to talk about. Throw in *Superboy* and a series of projected Green Lantern one-shots slated for '96, and it's no wonder that Ron Marz looks forward to the distraction of a baby in the house. "If somebody gave me the choice of playing with my son or working, I would rather play with my son. But, as you can see, I don't have that choice. So I work."

by Marc Shapiro

First comic read...
One of the real early Spider-Man or Avengers books.

Favorite comic of all time...
Probably *The Dark Knight Returns*. It was a real kick in the head.

Favorite work of your own...
My six-month-old son.

Superpower you would most want...
To be able to transport from one place to another.

Favorite munchie at 2 a.m....
Leftover Indian food

Nicknames you have...
Nothing that stuck past high school.

Favorite toy as a kid and as an adult...
As a kid, I really loved the Mego superhero dolls. As an adult, a handmade Kyle Rayner Green Lantern action figure that Terry Austin gave me for Christmas.

Things you collect...
Toys and books

Person who would play you in a movie about yourself...
Matthew Perry

Favorite cartoon...
"Batman: The Animated Series"

Person you'd most like to work with...
Mike Mignola

Person you would most like to meet...
Stephen King

Favorite musical performer...
Trent Reznor of Nine Inch Nails

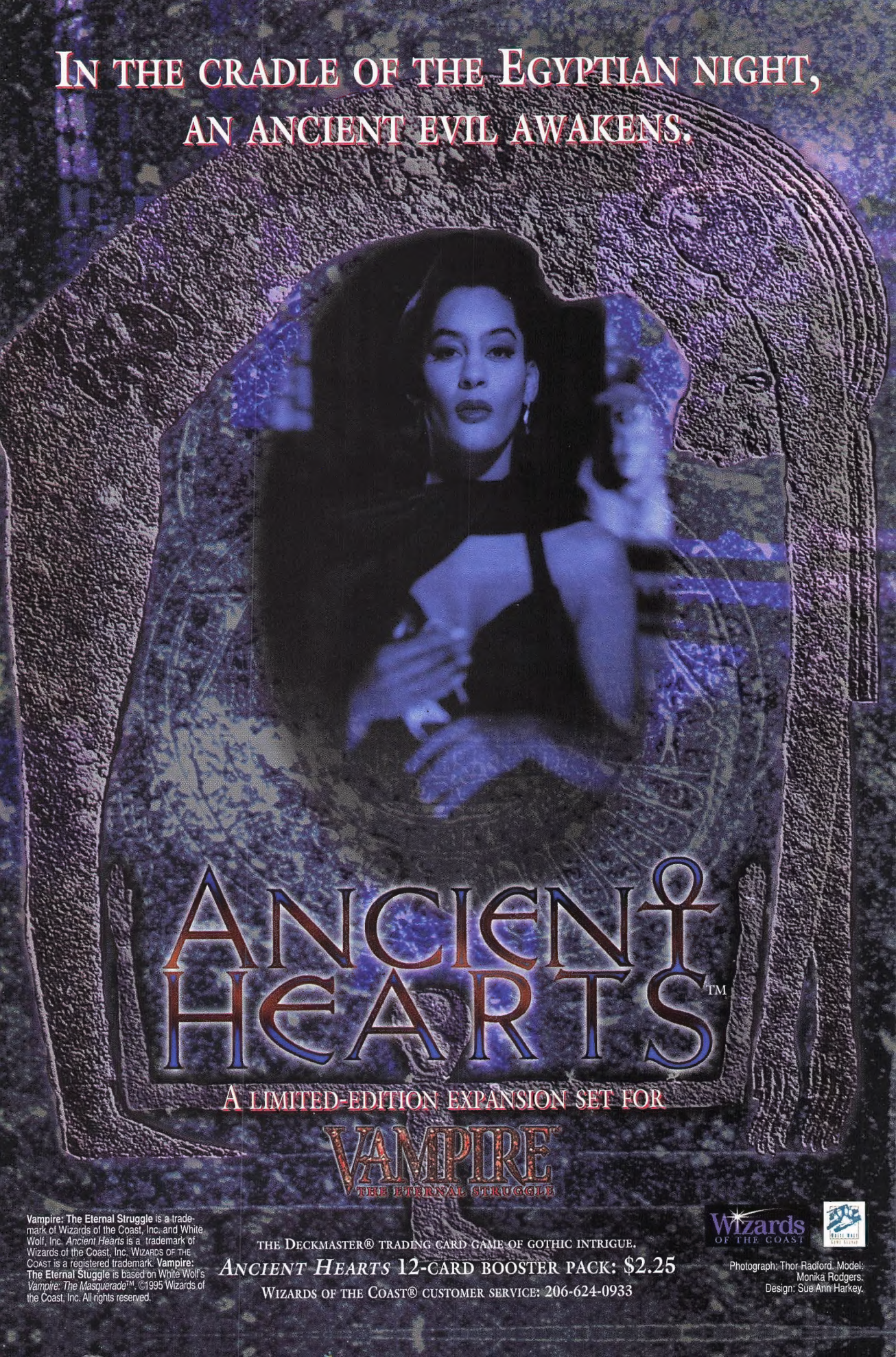
Favorite TV show...
"NYPD Blue"

Last good movie you saw...
"Heat"

Last good book you read...
The Devil Soldier, by Caleb Carr

If you had the power of The Beyonder...
To work faster and better.

In the cradle of the Egyptian night, an ancient evil awakens.



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It's that moment just after you rip it off, when the circuits are still pumping 'cause they don't know what hit 'em, and they've got that expression on their face like "Hey that's my arm!"...the first gush of oil from the open socket...the lights in their eyes going dim... yeah, that's when I know...I'm alive.

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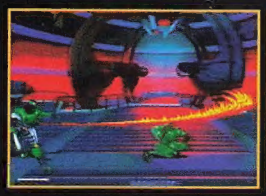

Salvo's Cybernetic Inferno completes a 12 Hit Chaos Combo!

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